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ACTS VII.—1 CORINTHIANS XVI.

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE are commentaries on the Acts by Dr. Stokes, in the "Expositor's Bible"; E. H. Plumptre ("New Testament Commentaries for Schools"); T. M. Lindsay ("Handbooks for Bible Classes"); C. J. Vaughan, "The Church of the First Days"; W. Arnot, "The Church in the House"; J. B. Sumner, "Lectures"; P. J. Gloag, "Commentary"; Parker, "Apostolic Life as revealed in the Acts"; H. W. Burrows, "Lectures"; J. Oswald Dykes, "From Jerusalem to Antioch."

On Romans there are commentaries by Godet, Agar Beet, Olshausen, H. C. G. Moule ("Cambridge Bible for Schools"); E. H. Gifford; C. Hodge, David Brown ("Handbooks for Bible Classes"). There are lectures on Romans by W. G. T. Shedd, Principal Dykes, J. B. Sumner, W. Marsh, R. Wardlaw, Dr. Chalmers, and Dr. James Morison.

On 1 Corinthians there are commentaries by Principal Edwards, Dods, Godet, Olshausen, Ellicott, and Agar Beet. F. W. Robertson's 'Expository Lectures"; and on chap. xv. Dr. Hanna's "Resurrection of the Dead," Dr. John Brown's "Resurrection and the Life"; Dr. Candlish's "Life in a Risen Saviour" may also be consulted.

A2013

ACTS VI.—XXVIII.

REFERENCES: vi. 15.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. xi.; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 126; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 282. vi. 25.—A. F. Muir, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 19.

Chaps. vi., vii.

STEPHEN.

From the history of Stephen we learn:—

I. That fidelity to truth provokes antagonism; holiness and sin are mutually repellent; love and selfishness are the opposites of each other; and sooner or later the followers of the one will come into collision with the votaries of the other. The opposition of the ungodly is one of the seals to the genuineness of our discipleship; and if we bear ourselves rightly under it, who can tell but that it may be the occasion of blessing to multitudes? The banner which hangs in idle folds round the flagstaff in the sultry stillness of the summer noon, is fully unfurled by the wild rudeness of the wintry wind; and men may see in the latter case the emblem and inscription which were invisible in the former. Even so the antagonism of our spiritual adversaries is valuable, in that it brings forth anew those traits of Christian character and points of Christian doctrine which otherwise would have been unobserved.

II. The deep interest which the glorified Redeemer has in His suffering followers. He cannot sit in such an emergency, for He is Himself persecuted in His dying disciple, and must go to soothe and sustain Him. Our foes can strike us only through our Saviour's heart. He is our shield and buckler, our high tower and our deliverer.

III. The peacefulness of the believer's death. "When he had said this, he fell asleep." These words tell of the peace that was in the martyr's heart. You cannot go to sleep with anxiety fretting your spirit; but when your mind is calm and undisturbed, then the night angel comes to you with her gift of forgetfulness and her ministry of restoration. So when we

read that Stephen fell asleep, we see through the words into the deep unbroken quiet of his soul.

IV. Words which seem to have been in vain are not always fruitless. Stephen's defence was unsuccessful so far, at least, as securing the preservation of his own life was concerned. But his argument was not lost, for when not long afterward the zealous Saul was converted on his way to Damascus, this address, I have no doubt, came back upon him, and became the means which, in the hands of the Holy Ghost, were used for his enlightenment in the significance of the gospel of Christ.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Paul the Missionary*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: vii. 2-17.—E. M. Goulburn, *Acts of the Deacons*, p. 80. vii. 9.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 61; E. D. Solomon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 235. vii. 9, 10.—J. N. Norton, *Old Paths*, p. 104. vii. 13.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes, Gospels and Acts*, p. 183. vii. 20-22.—F. W. Robertson, *The Human Race*, p. 51. vii. 22.—H. Wonnacott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 46. vii. 30.—*Ibid.*, p. 59. vii. 35.—J. B. Mozley, *Sermons, Parochial and Occasional*, p. 182; C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. i., p. 244. vii. 35, 36.—*Christian World Pulpit*, p. 75. vii. 37-55.—E. M. Goulburn, *Acts of the Deacons*, p. 126; H. Melvill, *Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 1627. vii. 38-53.—E. G. Gibson, *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 427. vii. 39.—H. P. Liddon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 152; *Ibid.*, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 129; *Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 129.

Chap. vii., ver. 44.—"Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness."

I. THE wandering of the Israelites was all a parable. It was, if we may trust apostolic teachings, all a Divine shadow of that great invisible and spiritual society, the yet more mysterious Ecclesia, "the Church throughout all ages" on its mighty march through time, with all its attendant omens and prodigies,—for such is the Church everywhere, a witness in the wilderness; such, indeed, is the Church; such are all its varieties of ordinance. It is the perpetual remonstrance against the sufficiency of the seen and temporal; it is a perpetual witness for the unseen and eternal; it is a perpetual testimony for the existence of a spiritual perpetuity and continuity; it is a mysterious procession; infinite aspirations are infused in the soul of man. The tabernacle of the testimony is the story of the Church and the soul—a witness for faith. A world with no tabernacle of Divine testimony has a philosophy which only sees the worst, which goes on declaring its dreary monologue that this is the worst of all possible worlds, that sleep is better

than waking, and death is better than sleep. In the presence of such thoughts, the sky shuts down upon us, there is no motive in life; as Emerson well says, "This low and hopeless spirit puts out the eyes, and such scepticism is slow suicide."

II. The pulpit has been through all the fluctuating ages a tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness. The pulpit is like that ancient tabernacle of my text,—it rests, but it moves: it rests in the ancient truths it was instituted to announce. Christ is final; and, as has been truly said, "Christianity is a fixed quantity, not a fluxion, and Jesus Christ is all in all"; it is a spiritual universe; it has its immense and infinite announcements, which, like the definitions of mathematics and the numbers of arithmetic, are unchangeable and final—we cannot go beyond them. We need no new Messiah; we shall find no wiser teacher, no more sufficient Saviour in any time to come. Christianity is complete, like the round globe and the blue sky. In giving to us the principles of the ultimate law of morality, He has exhausted the moral world of its treasures when He proclaims God for our Father. But what an unlimited progress is there in men's ideas and sentiments, and their application to religion; and should not the pulpit be the tabernacle of testimony to these, for the ideas of Christianity are progressive in the human mind? It is not the speculator but God Himself who goeth forth with our armies, who bids us to strike the tent and march forward to some spot where the future shall fulfil itself even as the past has been fulfilled.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 233

Chap. vii., vers. 47-50.—"But Solomon built him an house," etc.

THE Temples of God.

Note:—

I. The physical creation. "Heaven is My throne; and earth is My footstool. Hath not My hand made these things?" These words refer directly to the material creation, and imply that God fashioned the heaven and the earth to be a temple to Himself, in which He might manifest His glory.

II. The second creation, or Judaism. God became nearer man in Judaism than in the material creation. He was pleased to concentrate the symbol of His presence in one special locality, first in the Tabernacle, afterwards in the Temple. The Temple on Moriah was not the goal, it was only a stage in the onward march of the Divine economies.

III. The third creation, or Christianity. Christianity is described in prophecy as a "stone cut out of the mountain without hands." God's proper temple is holy humanity, and under the Christian dispensation He has found the temple He so earnestly coveted.

J. CYNDDYLAN JONES, *Studies in the Acts*, p. 159.

REFERENCES: vii. 51.—Parker, *City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 445. vii. 51-3.—S. A. Brooke, *Sermons*, p. 164. vii. 54-60.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 422. vii. 55, 56. Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 740; H. Melvill, *Voices of the Year*, vol. i., p. 58; E. M. Goulburn, *Acts of the Deacons*, p. 147.

Chap. vii., ver. 56.

THE Witnesses for the Glorified Son of Man.

I. When Stephen spoke the words of our text, the truth which he had been proclaiming in all his discourse, which he had perceived to be the subject and climax of all revelation, presented itself to him just as actually as any visible thing presents itself to the eye. It was not a doctrine of the Incarnation which he acknowledged in that hour—a mere doctrine would have stood him in little stead. It was a person who stood before him, a person upon whom he might call, in whom he might trust; he was sure that it was life and substance he was in contact with, not hard forms of the understanding. It was a Son of man on the right hand of God, an actual mediator between man and God, one in whom God could look well pleased upon man, in whom man could look up to God and be at peace. Was it not an opening of heaven which disclosed such a union of manhood with Godhead? Did not that opening of heaven foreshadow a shaking of all religions—of all polities upon earth—which stood on some other foundation than this?

II. St. Stephen's witness is the witness which the Church of God is to bear upon earth. The true martyr—the martyr who deserves honour and reverence from men—bears that witness and no other. Religious bodies are wrong only in pretending that they have been faithful stewards of the Divine message of men; that their divisions, hatreds, persecutions, have not marred it, broken it, inverted it; that each has not often been used by the wisdom of God to bring forth some witness of it which the other has suppressed or mangled; that there has not been a cry rising out of the depths of the human heart—often a cry of bitter wailing and cursing against them all—which has also, if we interpret it according to the teachings of Scripture, the

same significance. Judging according to human calculations, there never was a time when such men as Stephen were more demanded, or were less likely to appear. But we are not to judge according to human calculations. This is God's own cause, and He will take care of it. In places of which we know nothing, by processes of education which we cannot guess, He may have been preparing His witnesses. They will speak with power to the hearts of men who need a Son of man. They will be sure, even when their own vision is weakest, that the heavens will one day be opened, and that the Son of man will be revealed to the whole universe at His Father's right hand.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 59.

REFERENCES: vii. 56-60.—T. de Witt Talmage, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 56; E. M. Goulburn, *Acts of the Deacons*, p. 165. vii. 57, 60.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 428. vii. 58.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes, Gospels and Acts*, p. 186. vii. 59.—J. Pulsford. *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 111; Parker, *Cavendish Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 181.

Chap. vii., vers. 59, 60.

NOTE:—

I. The faith of Stephen. How was it manifested, and in what respect may we seek to imitate it? Now, I think we may say that as his faith was seen in every part of his trial, so most remarkably in the manner in which he faced death. It was seen in that upward looking of his soul to God in the hour of deepest suffering; it was proved by the cry which he then uttered, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." These words, spoken at such a time, must be regarded as the strongest evidence to the reality and soundness of Stephen's faith. They show us that he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Let us also be prepared beforehand. Let us try now and examine our faith. Do not expect to find comfort from it at the last, unless you have proved and tested it in the course and conduct of your common life. Calls for such proof are daily occurring. We have all periods of sorrow; we are all tried by many infirmities; we are all subject to the loss of health, and to the loss of friends. When such things happen unto us, then is the trial of our faith. Let us take them as sent for our good, our portion of the cross, and let us bear cheerfully our burden; ever amidst the present distress let our eye look steadfastly towards heaven.

II. The charity of Stephen. It was of that kind so commended by the Apostle; that which beareth all things, hopeth

all things, endureth all things. Martyr as he was, his death had not been that tranquil sleep in the Lord which now it is, had he carried with him to the grave one thought of harm, one feeling of revenge against his persecutors. But then, neither can *our* death be tranquil except on the same terms. It is not *safe* for any man to die at enmity with his fellow. Nay, more. It is not safe for any man to *live* at enmity with his fellow. The very charter by which we hold the promise of God's pardon is that we pardon our brother his trespasses.

H. D. B. RAWNSLEY, *Village Sermons*, 4th series, p. 110.

THE Martyrdom of Stephen.

I. The first question that we must ask ourselves in reading this story is, "What is the secret of all this meekness and of all this bravery? How came Stephen to be thus self-possessed before the frowning Sanhedrim, fearless amidst that excited multitude in his home-thrusts of truth, brave in the crisis of trial, forgiving at the moment of death?" Men are not born thus. As we mentally put ourselves into his circumstances, we feel that no physical hardihood, no endowment of natural bravery, could sustain us. There must have been some Divine bestowment, in order to secure this undaunted heroism and this supreme tenderness of love. Then, was it a miraculous gift, reserved for some specially commissioned and specially chosen man, or is it the common heritage of all mankind? These are questions that become interesting as we dwell upon the developments of holy character that are presented to us in the life of Stephen. The secret lies in the delineation of the man. He was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." He did not leap into this character in a moment; he did not spring, fully armed, as Minerva is fabled to have sprung from the brain of Jupiter. There was no mystic charm by which the Graces clustered around him. He had faith, and that faith was the gift of God to him, as it is the gift of God to us. He had the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and that indwelling is promised to us, as to him, by the blood-shedding of our Surety and Saviour. The only difference between us and him is that he grasped the blessing with a holier boldness and lived habitually in a closer communion with God.

II. The lot of the Christian is, ordinarily, an inheritance of persecution. There was nothing in the character of Stephen to arouse any special hostility. He was reputed learned and honourable, he had refinement of manner, and as the Church's

almoner his office was benevolent and kind. But he was faithful, and his reproofs stung his adversaries to the quick. He was consistent, and his life was a perpetual rebuke to those who lived otherwise. He was unanswerable, and that was a crime too great to be forgiven, and so they stoned Stephen. And persecution has been the lot of the Church in all ages.

III. I gather thirdly from this subject that strength and grace are always given most liberally when they are most needed. With special and onerous duty there came to Stephen specially replenished supply. How it rushed in upon him when he needed it! He went into that fierce council unprepared; but how it came upon him—the grace, the strength, the manliness, the utterance—just as he required it, and lighting up, making him so translucent, so to speak, with glory, that, breaking through the serge and sackcloth of his humiliation, the inner glory mantled out upon the countenance as the morning mantles upon the sky! "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

IV. We gather from the narrative that death is not death to a believer in Jesus.

> "Brutal oaths and frantic yells
> And curses loud and deep"—

these were the lullaby that sang him to his dreamless slumber. But when God wills a man to sleep, it does not matter how much noise there is around him. "He giveth His beloved sleep."

W. M. PUNSHON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 385.

REFERENCES: vii. 59, 60.—P. Robertson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 179; J. C. Jones, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 385; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1175; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 31. vii. 60.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 148; C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. i., p. 261; *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 112. vii.—E. G. Gibson, *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 425; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 213. viii. 1.—H. P. Liddon, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 366; *Ibid.*, *Thoughts on Present Church Troubles*, p. 63; *Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 1132. viii. 2.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 283; E. M. Goulburn, *Acts of the Deacons*, p. 189; Bishop Simpson, *Sermons*, p. 421.

Chap. viii., ver. 3 (with xiv., ver. 19; ix., ver. 1; xxiii., ver. 12, etc.).—"Saul made havock of the church."

THE Smiter Smitten.

We learn from these texts:—

I. That a man's life comes back upon him.

II. That a man's Christian experience must be affected by the unchristian life he has lived. In reviewing these statements

in the light of history and revelation we see (1) that the distribution of penalties is God's work and not man's; (2) that under all the apparent confusion of human life there is a principle of justice; (3) that the greatest sufferings may be borne with patience and hopefulness.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 113.

Chap. viii., ver. 8 (with xx., ver. 28).

SAUL and Paul.

The change in the heart and life of Paul shows:—

I. The marvellous power of the grace of God.

II. The difference between sanctifying human energies and destroying them.

III. The possible greatness of the change which awaits even those who are now in Christ.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 173.

REFERENCES: viii. 5-8.—*New Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 84. viii. 5-13.—E. M. Goulburn, *Acts of the Deacons*, p. 234.

Chap. viii., ver. 8.—"And there was great joy in that city."

A CHRISTIAN City.

It is manifestly true that an aggregate of individuals may possess, in its own peculiar way, the spiritual character which the individual possesses, and a city, like a man, have and exhibit Christian faith and Christian righteousness and Christian love.

I. Look first at faith, then. Perhaps this seems hardest to establish. Look at this city where you live. It is a Christian city, a believing city, and why? How do you know it? It is not because an occasional document is solemnised with the name of God, it is not because a few verses of your Bible are read in your public schools; it is because that spirit which has never been in the world save as the fruit of Christian faith prevails in and pervades its government and social life—the spirit of responsibility, of trust in man, and of hopefulness for the great human future. Those are the real spiritual results of Christian believing. They are not found in heathenism. It does not come by accident; it has entered into us through the long belief of our fathers, which we ourselves do still keep, in spite of all our ecclesiasticisms and disputes,—the believing in a humanity created by God, redeemed by Jesus Christ, inspired by the Holy Spirit. If we doubt this, we doubt whether a city can have and show a Christian faith.

II. Righteousness. Every city has a moral character distinguishable from, however it may be made up of, the individual character of its inhabitants. This is seen in two ways: first, in the official acts which it must do—acts of justice or injustice, of deceit or candour, by which it appears as a person acting with official unity among its sister cities. But even more, its moral character appears in its power and influence, in the moral atmosphere which pervades it, and exercises its power upon all who come within it. A Christian city is not all a dream. Already we have a city with enough of Christ in it feebly to turn away from its gates some vices which once came freely into the old city. Very far off, but still in the same direction, we can see the city so completely filled with Christ, that no sin can come in, nothing can defile it, "neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie."

III. Love. The charity of a city is a distinct testimony to one thing which has been wrought into the convictions of that city, and that one thing is the value of a man, and that conviction has come nowhere except out of Christian faith. Deepen a city's Christianity, and the city's charity must deepen and widen too.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 369.

REFERENCES: viii. 8.—C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. i., p. 280. viii. 9-25.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 429. viii. 14-17.—Bishop Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 24. viii. 14-26.—E. M. Goulburn, *Acts of the Deacons*, p. 254. viii. 17.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 225; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 131. viii. 21.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 424. viii. 22.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 30; C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. i., p. 298. viii. 26.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 55. viii. 26-30.—E. M. Goulburn, *Acts of the Deacons*, p. 276. viii. 26-39.—E. Bersier, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 98. viii. 30.—*Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 218; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 305; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 27; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 52; C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. i., p. 316. viii. 30, 31—J. Baines, *Sermons*, p. 241; E. M. Goulburn, *Acts of the Deacons*, pp. 295, 313. viii. 30-33.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1792. viii. 31-6.—E. M. Goulburn, *Acts of the Deacons*, p. 336. viii. 32, 33.—E. M. Plumptre, *Church Sermons*, vol. i., p. 337. viii. 35.—E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 17; W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, vol. i., p. 87. viii. 36.—J. Thain Davidson, *Sure to Succeed*, p. 147; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 56. viii. 37.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 240. viii. 39.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. viii., p. 220; J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 13; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 10th series, p. 186. viii. 39, 40.—E. M. Goulburn, *Acts of the Deacons*, p. 361.

Chap. ix., vers. 1-19.

THE Conversion of St. Paul.

That blessed war of aggression which Jesus Christ wages upon the evil one is a war which is made to maintain itself. Christ's soldiers are His captured enemies. Every soul won from resistance to the Cross is marked at once with the Cross-badge and sent into the field to win others. Perhaps the most notable instance of this in history is the conversion of Saul. Jesus Christ never encountered a bitterer or an abler foe; Jesus Christ never won a mightier captain for His army.

I. The important fact that such a man suddenly abandoned the Pharasaic theology and became the Church's foremost preacher amply justifies the detail with which the story is here related. The immediate occasion of Saul's change of life was quite as exceptional as the change itself was eventful. Christ directly called this misguided persecutor to Himself; He called him personally. And this personal manifestation of Him whom the heavens had received is, I suppose, solitary in Christian history.

II. The general nature of the change which passed over Saul is, I think, to be pretty well made out from what we know of the man before and after. If the punctilious and legal obedience he had been striving after was proved to have been consistent it was a gross breach of the law in its spirit, and he saw how unholy and unrighteous a life his had been. Saul's dialectic was quick enough to see that it must be the spirit and not the letter that God cares for. Yet there was little need for dialectic. The spiritual sense of the man, purged now from pride, which always blinds us, and illuminated by the Holy Spirit of God whom before he kicked against, saw what false education and self-righteousness had kept him from seeing, that the law by which alone we may please God is a spiritual thing. The moment this spiritual law of love to God and man, a law of heart motives, was made plain to him, sin revived, and he died. His mind reverted for help, turned round about in his loneliness to the names of those very disciples down in his note book that he had come to arrest, and now, in a sweet vision, he seemed to see one of these friends of Jesus come into the home where he lay helpless and in darkness, and give him light. See how Jesus Christ must smite down that He may lift up. He first came in person by the way, and brought judgment, darkness, horror, and almost death. He came now, the second time, by

the gentle words of His humble servant, came by the blessed sacrament of His Church, and so coming He brought light, peace, and the hope and desire of a better life.

J. Oswald Dykes, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 469.

Chap. ix., vers. 1-23.

Early History and Conversion of Paul.

Viewed as a public event in the history of the Christian Church, the conversion of Paul furnishes new and independent testimony to the Divine origin of the gospel. The story is perfectly authenticated. Twice did the Apostle repeat it in detail before public assemblies; and the book in which we find it recorded was written less than thirty years after the events were said to have occurred. We learn from the incident:—

I. The wisdom of God's providence. Saul, as he himself tells us, was separated from his birth for the work of Apostleship; but though he was advancing towards middle age before he was actually converted, yet all his intervening history was in reality a preparation for the true labour of his life. His birth and boyhood in a Greek city gave him familiarity with that language which he was to use in all his journeyings. His intimate acquaintance with the system of the Pharisees, acquired in the school of Gamaliel, enabled him to cope with those Judaizing adversaries with whom he had everywhere to contend. A "Hebrew of the Hebrews, yet at the same time a native Hellenist and a Roman citizen," he combined in himself, as Dr. Schaff has said, "the three great nationalities of the ancient world, and was endowed with all the natural qualifications for a universal apostleship."

II. We see here all the riches of the Redeemer's grace. Had the Christians then in Jerusalem been asked to name the man who was least likely to become a convert to the faith, they might possibly have specified Saul of Tarsus. Yet observe how thoroughly he is changed, and how the transformation was effected by the might of gentleness. Nothing is more remarkable in the whole narrative than the tenderness of the remonstrance which our Lord addressed to the persecutor. He came in love, He spoke in gentleness, and the heart which might have been hardened by condemnation was melted by mercy.

W. M. Taylor, *Paul the Missionary*, p. 27.

References: ix. 2.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 340; *Ibid.* vol. xix., p. 117. ix. 3, 4.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 46. ix. 3-9.

—B. F. Westcott, *The Revelation of the Risen Lord*, p. 191. ix. 4.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 309; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 169.

Chap. ix., vers. 4, 5.—"And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" etc.

THE Lord's dealing with St. Paul has been precisely the way of His dealing with thousands and tens of thousands whom He has sought to make in like manner partakers of the light of the everlasting life. Them, too,—

I. He meets in the way. He hedges up that way with thorns so that they cannot find their path. He stands before them, as He stood before Balaam, with a drawn sword in His hand, willing them to go back to the path of duty and to choose the way of life. He shows them, too, His glory. The earthly in them stands abashed before the glory of the heavenly which is revealed to them, even as the stars of night fade and fail before the rising sun, and have no glory by reason of the glory which excelleth.

II. Notice another aspect in which St. Paul's conversion was but the pattern and exemplar of what every other man's conversion must be. We sometimes assume that there was no resistance of the old man in him, and that there could have been none—so mighty were the spiritual forces brought to bear, to cast down the strongholds of sin and Satan in him, that in this respect at least his conversion was unlike any other. But everything indicates the contrary. We are not permitted to see what passed within him during those three mysterious days when, having been brought to Damascus, trembling and astonished, he saw no man, and did neither eat nor drink. But of one thing we may be sure—that they were days of a mighty internal conflict; and in that "Behold, he prayeth," uttered by him who seeth in secret, in that, and only in that, at length there was a token that he had at last yielded himself the captive of Christ—vanquished by Almighty love. And here, too, in these outlines of his conversion, we must read what must be the main features of our own.

III. The whole after life of St. Paul was a continuation of the work which on that day was auspicated and begun in him. And such must be our lives, such must be our conversion. Not something which we remember once to have been, not something which every day is receding into greater and dimmer

distance, but something in the ever new power of which we are to live from day to day.

F. TRENCH, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3656.

REFERENCE: ix. 4, 5.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 160.

Chap. ix., ver. 5.—"It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

THIS declaration points:—

I. To past impressions. Many persons regard this startling event as the first and only period that the Saviour sought the services of an ardent man; that without any previous internal preparation he was changed in the whole current and purposes of his life. But this cannot be altogether true. That this was the decisive moment in his history there cannot be a question. The grand transformation then took place, but the Divine Spirit had been at work within him before. There had been influences and arguments at work on St. Paul's mind, and these had been the goads against which he had rebelled. And what were these past expressions, and whence did they arise? I think they must have arisen from his education and experience. It was impossible that he, with his candid nature, should have witnessed the pure, loving, self-sacrificing lives of these men and women whom he had haled to prison, and not make some inquiry as to the faith which had accomplished so much in them. And then the very teacher at whose feet he sat as a revering scholar had spoken about this new religion in a manner that seemed to imply that he had in his own mind a half-conviction of its truth. These things formed the goads which stung Saul, against which he struggled.

II. These words not only point to past impressions, but they describe present struggles. Many a man has been conscious of this battle going on within him for years; this struggle of what he knows to be right for the sin he loves so well.

III. These words proclaim certain misery and future defeat. There could be nothing but unhappiness and failure as the result of the course which Saul took, the opposition he offered to the progress of Christ's kingdom. It was useless for him to kick against the goads; they only stung him the more severely; resistance was of no avail; he could not fight successfully against a superior power. This is a lesson which seems true enough, but it is difficult to learn. There is only one out of two courses—to bow and acknowledge the grace and power of Christ, or resolutely set yourselves against Christ, and at last

be broken as a rod of iron. For the enemies of Christ shall be made his footstool.

W. BRADEN, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 516.

REFERENCES: ix. 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 709. ix. 5, 6. —*Ibid.*, vol. xxvi., No. 1520.

Chap. ix., ver. 6.—"**And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?**"

THE Apostle's experience may never again be exactly reproduced as regards its external circumstances; but in every manifestation of God to the soul which has hitherto been ignorant of His true being, close upon the question "Who art thou, Lord?" will follow the further inquiry, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

I. Action is the necessary result of Divine illumination. When God lifts the veil to reveal Himself to His creature, it is not merely to satisfy the curiosity with which man seeks to penetrate into the mysteries of the invisible; it is not only to call into play the warm emotions of man's heart, and set them all aglow with the tingling of the touch of an unseen world. It is indeed to increase man's knowledge of the infinite, but to the end that that knowledge may lead him on to new roads of duty thereby thrown open to him; it is to kindle man's affections with the coal from off the altar of the invisible, but on this account that he may so be empowered to act not in the power of the natural man, but in the strength of the supernatural gift of the Spirit.

II. But the means—the way by which, and in which, the blessed end is to be carried out—how difficult to select, how dangerous to be mistaken; to have the bright future forfeited by a wrong choice! Trembling and astonished at the dignity of his privilege, man fears by wilful or ignorant choice of means to frustrate the purpose which has so graciously been provided for him. Dedicating himself and all his powers to the God who has chosen him, he cries with the earnestness of hearty devotion, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" In other words, he realises and prepares to follow out his vocation.

III. In following out our vocation, we have to remind ourselves of two great principles that characterise the works of God as performed by Himself, and must therefore govern that work which, in union with Him, we hope to accomplish in the world. With God nothing is too minute to be taken count of. With God there is no undue haste. These must then be the

laws of our conduct. "He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little." "Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come; it will not tarry."

H. HOLLINGWORTH, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Oct. 18th, 1877.

REFERENCES: ix. 6.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. iii., p. 310; W. Brookfield, *Sermons*, p. 74; Bishop Barry, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 65; W. Pulsford, *Trinity Church Sermons*, p. 250; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 38; *Sermons for Boys and Girls*, p. 349; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 35; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 18; vol. iv., p. 89. ix. 8.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 333; vol. xvi., p. 354; vol. xix., p. 119. ix. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1838. ix. 11.—*Ibid.*, vol. i., No. 16; vol. xxxi., No. 1860; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 308; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 131. ix. 13-16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 944.

Chap. ix., ver. 15.—"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

I. SAUL is here a vessel. The word here rendered "vessel" may also be translated "instrument," but either reading gives a good sense. God is an infinite spring giving inexhaustibly forth; men are empty vessels receiving everlastingly of His fulness.

II. He is a vessel *unto Me.* The vessel had been wrested that day from the power of the enemy; henceforth he will be a vessel separated unto and honoured in the service of Jesus Christ.

III. "He is a chosen vessel unto Me." (1) This must mean that he was a choice vessel. (2) He was chosen or ordained of God unto the work of the Apostleship.

IV. He is a vessel of election unto Me to *bear My name.* Paul bore the name of Jesus Christ (1) in his intellect, (2) in his heart, (3) in his ministry.

V. He was to bear God's name before Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. (1) The wide scope of his ministry required certain social qualifications which the other apostles did not possess. (2) The work allotted to him demanded great intellectual culture in order to its successful performance. (3) The work demanded much moral courage.

J. CYNDDYLAN JONES, *Studies in the Acts*, p. 196.

REFERENCES: ix. 15.—Bishop Stubbs, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 49. ix. 16.—J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 9th series, p. 48.

Chap. ix., vers. 19-30.

DAMASCUS—Arabia—Jerusalem.

We see from this chapter:—

I. The minute care which God has over His people. He gives to Ananias the street and the house in the great city of Damascus where Paul is sitting in his blindness, and sends him thither to his help. But though the commission came to Ananias supernaturally, we are not to imagine that similar things—similar, I mean, in kind, though lower in degree—are not occurring now. So let the people of God take comfort, whereever they are and whatever be their circumstances. God knows everything about them, and in some way or other He will manifest His care for them. His letters are all accurately addressed, and none of them go astray.

II. God gives special training for special work. This was furnished to Paul, not only by his conversion, but by his communings with the Lord in Arabia. He who would preach the gospel with power must be himself a believer in the Lord. The secret of true, heart-stirring eloquence in the pulpit is, next after the power of the Holy Ghost, that which the French Abbé has very happily called the "accent of conviction" in the speaker. He who would preach to others must be much alone with his Bible and his Lord, else when he appears before his people, he will send them to sleep with his pointless platitudes, or starve them with his empty conceits.

III. We learn, lastly, to give a cordial welcome to new converts and new-comers in the Church. Ananias went as soon as he was sent, and said, "Brother Saul!" How these words must have thrilled the heart of the blinded one! So again, in dealing with young converts, how slow some are to believe in the genuineness and thoroughness of God's own work! It was not so with Barnabas, and it ought not to be so with us.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Paul the Missionary*, p. 47.

Chap. ix., ver. 20.—"And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God."

I. PROMPTITUDE is a pre-requisite and essential element of success. A beginning is only a beginning, and yet much depends on how it is made. Some beginnings are like the spring on the mountain side, gushing into life and flowing clearly. Some are like waters from a mossy soil, trickling, oozing, so little visible and so uncertain that you cannot tell

where they begin. But here is a vigorous clear beginning, here is the saliency of a new life. That promptitude of Paul's saved him from many difficulties which else would have beset his course. It raised his conversion above suspicion. It opened his way. It conformed his faith. It made retreat more difficult. It made him a fit example for all who are beginning the Christian course to the end of time.

II. If the principle is true, it is applicable all down the scale; not to great men only, but to every man. "Straightway" do what thy hand findeth to do. (1) Straightway. And your new consciousness will become bright and clear, as it never will do by abstinence and repression. Doubts gather round the inactive mind, over the slumbering, reluctant will, as mists and exhalations over the stagnant pool. Work in spite of them; work through them on to duty,—they are gone or only linger, thin and luminous, like vapours that are vanishing away. (2) Straightway. And the outer difficulties, which gather like the inner doubts, will, like them, be dispersed, and you will see them no more; or better still, seeing them, you will not fear or regard them, but go on your unswerving way. (3) You will give to your soul one of the first and most indispensable conditions of growth. (4) You will lay the first stones in the great edifice of habit. This is the true tower with the heaven-reaching top, the tower of a man's life; and on the very first stones of that tower you will see written the word "Straightway." (5) You will end no small part of what may be called the lesser miseries of life. (6) The enemies of our true life and of the gospel of Christ are taken at advantage, and timorous friends—the discouraged, the weak, the halting—receive as it were a new inspiration. Spiritual strength goes from one to another like electricity, and a soul in prompt action necessarily gives it out, charging other souls with the celestial fire till they too glow and burn with love to Christ.

A. RALEIGH, *From Dawn to the Perfect Day*, p. 87.

Chap. ix., ver. 31.—"The comfort of the Holy Ghost."

OUR Lord tells us that the Comforter's work as Comforter is to abide, to teach, to remind, to testify, to reprove. These are the ways in which He comforts. The text carries on the same idea. "The Churches ... were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." What then is the conclusion at which we arrive? That the Holy Ghost does not perform the office of Comforter by

comfort only or by direct comfort, but through the exercise of other of His prerogatives, such as teaching, testifying, and reproving.

I. We must not divide the sevenfold operation of the Holy Ghost. We must not seek comfort without holiness, nor holiness without comfort; and often the path to any one of His influences lies direct and straight from the other. If you endeavour to obtain any one of His actings without the rest, probably you will thwart Him. The best way is to acknowledge the Holy Ghost as that great Being who acts upon the human mind, and to place yourself entirely in His hands, to do with you just as he sees best.

II. I believe that the Holy Ghost generally begins His consoling processes by increasing our distress. He convinces of sin first, *i.e.*, Christ justifying; and righteousness, *i.e.*, pardon; then of judgment, *i.e.*, the judgment, the termination of all evil; and so He brings out "judgment unto victory," and "tribulation has worked patience," and patience experience, and experience hope; and that hope maketh not ashamed; the sorrow is turned into joy, the Sanctifier is the Comforter, and the comfort is true, deep, holy, and for ever. Thus, then, even in His comfortings, the Holy Ghost, in His incalculable processes, vindicates the truth of the emblem, and is as the wind, acting in His sovereignty, but no man knoweth whence He cometh nor whither He goeth. But deep and utterly out of reach as His methods are, it is a wonderful provision that the Third Person in the blessed Trinity should be revealed to us characteristically as a Comforter. It is this which makes Him over to us in a relationship that matches the necessity of our daily being. The Holy Ghost is many things. He is a quickener, He is a gladdener, He is a glorifier, but above all He is a Comforter. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 181.

REFERENCES: ix. 31.—C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. ii., p. 41; W. G. Horder, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 266. ix. 32-5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1315. ix. 34.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 329. ix. 36-42.—N. Axtell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 211. ix.—*Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 278. x. 1, 2.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 29; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons to English Congregations in India*, p. 240; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 255. x. 4.—E. M. Goulburn, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 112. x. 5.—A. W. Hare, *The Alton Sermons*, p. 801. x. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1823.

Chap. x., vers. 14, 15.

THE Comprehensiveness of the Gospel.

I. The gospel is here compared to a *great sheet*,—a clear hint as to the cosmopolitan character of Christianity. It is noteworthy that Christianity as let down from heaven is larger than Christianity as represented in human creeds.

II. The gospel is compared to a great sheet let down from heaven. This idea is emphatically Divine. (1) You will not find it in heathenism; (2) you will not find it in Judaism.

III. The gospel is compared to a great sheet let down from heaven and knit at the four corners. What the precise meaning of this phrase is we cannot positively tell; it would, therefore, be wrong of us to try to make it *prove* anything. But commentators see here an intimation that the gospel is to extend its frontiers, and to exert its influence over the four quarters of the globe.

IV. Peter is here taught that the distinction between clean and unclean is abolished.

V. After the vision came the interpretation. God always explains His supernatural revelations by natural events. Providence is the best commentary on the Bible. Just when God was stirring large thoughts in Peter respecting the universality of the gospel, He was also working silently, but effectually, with Cornelius to send a messenger to the Apostle desiring a fuller knowledge of salvation at his hands.

J. C. JONES, *Studies in the Acts*, p. 240.

Chap. x., ver. 15.—"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

THE Transition from the Old to the New.

I. The questions raised by this narrative are *not* met by the simple consideration of the narrow prejudice and even bigotry of the apostle of the circumcision, and the liberal teachings of the vision which inaugurated a new era in the heart of the apostle, and through him in the world. From our Christian standpoint the views were narrow—narrow as the discipline of school is to the student, narrow as the discipline of the student seems to the man. But whatever they might be, they were God's handiwork; and that is a matter much overlooked in the judgment of a boastfully liberal age like this. God knew how much zeal for God was at the bottom of the "not so" of His sturdy servant, and dealt gently with prejudices which hitherto had been a shield to all that was most precious to Peter's heart.

Consider the exclusions of the Mosaic law. Read Lev. xi. 2-20 and Deut. xiv. 3-21. Let us, while we see how much prejudices like Peter's, blindly nursed, would stand in the way of progress, recognise how much good there was in his steady determination to cleave to that which, for the present, had strong evidence of being Divine.

II. In the early stages of human culture nothing is strong enough to curb man's desires on the one hand, and to stimulate the exercise of the faculties of discernment and election on the other, but the solemn power of religion. And God began from the beginning with the Jews, and made the simplest matters of right or prudence matters of religion from the very first. They were to eat every morsel, frequent every place, and fulfil every function of personal or social life, "because He, the Lord their God, the holy God," would have it so.

III. The progress of society has tended to release men from these bands of religious law, and to bring all that concerns man's welfare and culture under the influence of the special faculties which have charge of the separate departments of his life. The progress of Christianity tends to place all man's acts or habits under the rule of his natural faculties, given to him for this very end, and to make the right use of those faculties the most sacred duty of his life before God. First law, then liberty, in order to the discovery of the diviner law, "the perfect law of liberty," wherein to continue is to be blessed.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *Christian World Pulpit*, May 12th, 1875.

REFERENCES: x. 15.—J. Baldwin Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 296; C. Morris, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iii., p. 440.

Chap. x., ver. 19.—"While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee."

VISIONS and Tasks.

I. The power of man to stand between abstract truth upon the one side and the concrete facts of life upon the other, comes from the co-existence in his human nature of two different powers, without the possession of both of which no man possesses a complete humanity. One of these powers is the power of knowing, and the other is the power of loving. The more perfectly these two constituents of human nature meet the more absolutely they are proportioned to each other, and the more completely they are blended so much the more ready will the human nature be for the fulfilment of every function of humanity. And as one of the loftiest functions of humanity is

to stand between the absolute truth and the world's needs, and to transmit the one in such a way that it can really reach and help the other, then it will also follow that the more perfectly the knowing faculty and the loving faculty meet in any man the more that man's life will become a transmitter and interpreter of truth to other men.

II. Every truth which it is possible for man to know it is good for him to know with reference to his brother men. Only in that way is the truth which he knows kept at its loftiest and purest. This is the daily meaning which I want to find in the picture of Peter seeing his vision on the house-top and the three men knocking in the street below. Cast off your sins, not for yourself, but for some soul which possibly may learn from you what it could not learn in any other way, how good and strong and forgiving is the sinner's God. It is a terrible thing to have seen the vision, and to be so wrapped up in its contemplation as not to hear the knock of needy hands upon our doors. But there is no greater happiness in all the world than for a man to love Christ for the mercy Christ has shown his soul, and then to open his whole heart outward, and help to save his brethren's souls with the same salvation in which he rejoices for himself. May none of us go through life so poor as never to have known that happiness.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *Twenty Sermons*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: x. 19.—Phillips Brooks, *Twenty Sermons*, p. 1. x. 28.—*Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 261. x. 29.—Parker, *Cavendish Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 3. x. 33.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 104; Parker, *The Ark of God*, p. 192; C. J. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. ii., p. 78.

Chap. x., ver. 34.—"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him."

I. THE warning contained in the text is not unnecessary. For though few or none, I suppose, consciously hold in the grossest sense that God is a respecter of persons, yet in all things, from supposed religious enlightenment down to the smallest advantages of personal gifts or outward circumstances, we see men under temptation to act as if they thought so. In other words, we see them accepting privileges of all kinds with a certain complacency which betrays no sense of a correspondingly enhanced responsibility. If we recognise this, the commemoration of Christian verities which we make on Trinity Sunday ought

to be much more than a technical exposition of beliefs. It can hardly be less than a call to a higher morality. What we want, as Frederick Robertson truly says, is a gospel for the guilty. And this is what assuredly comes to believers in the revelation of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

II. Let us remember that even when we seem to be using our gifts profitably, we may be using them in a spirit of blindness and presumption before God, as unlovely as that of those who more openly misuse them. High intellectual culture, good as it is and stimulating, often carries with it an element of moral weakness in developing a man's acuteness out of all proportion to his training in judgment and moral strength. It has a tendency, especially in early life, to lead to a very false estimate of qualities so common as mere cleverness, or even cleverness combined with learning, to overrate them as possessions, and as keys to unlock what is really deepest in human life,—to make a man overlook the fact that others whom he perhaps despises for their beliefs, are able to rest in them, not because they are less acute than their critics, but because they are of a more earnest mood and a finer spirit. May God keep us all from yielding to the temptations to which our several temperaments or circumstances may most naturally incline us—from idleness and selfish indulgence—from coldness and vanity—that none of these things may ever blind us to our true position and duty as in the sight of the great Judge who is no respecter of persons.

D. HORNBY, *Oxford Review and Journal*, May 24th, 1883.

Chap. x., ver. 34.—"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."

THIS statement cannot mean (1) that God cares for no man; (2) that God treats all men alike; (3) that God exercises no sovereignty of choice in the communication of His grace to men. If the text does not mean these things, what does it mean?

I. First, that Jehovah is not God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also.

II. Next, the God of the whole earth had regard to all nations in the gift of His Son. He excluded or excepted no people, or nation, or kindred—no section, or class, or family of the human race, in the provision that He made in the gift and sacrifice and resurrection of Christ for human salvation.

III. Again, the gospel of that salvation is to be preached in the power of the Spirit unto all nations. There is no difference in the need that all nations have of that gospel. We all have

sinned and come short of the glory of God. As the old world needed it, so also does this modern world; as the Eastern world, so the Western world,—all round, the world wants this salvation, and God, who is no respecter of persons, would have His Church more impartial than she has been hitherto in making known to all the world the gospel of His grace.

IV. In His present providential government, God's thoughts and ways are not partial and unjust. The exterior aspect of things is so much to us, while it is nothing at all to Him. It is only in so far as we have the mind of God that we penetrate the superficial skin of things and are able to judge righteously.

V. In the great day of the judgment of men, God will render to every man according to his works. Every work or fact of a man's life will be estimated in the full light of all the surrounding circumstances,—the temptations if it were evil, and the inducements if it were good, and with God's unerring knowledge of the spirit in which it was done, and the real motives from which it proceeded. And when things are thus laid bare in God's light, shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

D. FRASER, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 426.

REFERENCES: x. 34.—J. Pulsford, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 113; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 329; *Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 406. x. 34, 35.—T. T. Munger, *The Freedom of Faith*, p. 47. Parker, *Cavendish Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 73; M. Nicholson, *Communion with Heaven*, p. 339. x. 35.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 44. x. 36.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 952; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 73; G. T. Coster, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 189. x. 38.—*Ibid.*, vol. xi., No. 655; vol. xvi., No. 929; Bishop Ryle, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 294; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 127; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 277; G. Litting, *Thirty Children's Sermons*, p. 90.

Chap. x., ver. 42.—"He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead."

CHRIST the Judge.

Both by natural right, and by a special claim acquired and superinduced on that, the Son of God is Judge of mankind; the natural right putting—as Creator—all things into His hand, and man among these, as their final Arranger and Disposer; the acquired claim giving an especial fitness to His being Judge of men, inasmuch as they are His own peculiar possession, and the family of which He is the undoubted and manifested Head. But there are some subordinate and lesser reasons why He and no other should be the Judge of mankind.

I. He unites in Himself those proprieties for the high office which none other could. The judgment will be for the deeds done in the body, and will not take place till the dead are again united to their bodies. By God's eternal laws of self-manifestation to His creatures, none other than the incarnate Son of God can be the Judge of mankind; can stand visible and audible on this earth of ours, exercising over us all a right of disposal, inherent in Him, because He is our Creator; purchased and assured to Him, because He is our Redeemer.

II. It would be requisite for the final assurance of God's people and conviction of God's enemies, that one should be the chief agent who might cause the greatest possible joy to the one and the greatest possible remorse and dismay to the other. For remember, *that* judgment will be set to redress the wrongs of the whole lifetime of the world.

III. The day and hour of the final judgment are hidden in the counsels of the Father. We have Christ's own word for two things respecting it, the one of which we may well set against the other as a corrective, and both of which form solemn incentives to watchfulness. The first is, that when that day is near there will be plain and undeniable signs of its approach; as plain to those who are watching for them as the budding of the trees is a token that summer is nigh. The other is, that when the day actually does come, it will be sudden and unexpected, as a thief breaking into the house at dead of night. In other words, the Church will, on the one hand, not be left uninformed of the signs of her Lord's near approach; and on the other, she will not lay these signs so deeply to heart as to be thoroughly awakened and on the look out for Him.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 53.

REFERENCES: xi. 1-18.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 239. xi. 8.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 53.

Chap. xi., vers. 13, 14.

I. God's word treats all men as needing to be saved.

II. God's word gives us to understand that all men can be saved.

III. God's word prescribes the conditions of every man's being saved.

IV. God's word settles the conclusion that even good men, unconverted, cannot be saved.

C. S. ROBINSON, *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 352.

REFERENCE: xi. 13, 14.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 252.

Chap. xi., ver. 18.—"When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

I. It was God's will that, by Jew and Gentile, by heretic and orthodox, by men of the East and men of the West, the truth should be tried and sifted,—the power of the word brought out, and the might of His Spirit demonstrated. Had Judaism prevailed, the sacred spark of Divine life must have been overlaid and ultimately extinguished. But, for the recognition of the Unity of God, for the conservation of the moral conscience, for the maintenance of the record of God's everlasting covenant, it was necessary that the Jewish element should abide and be incorporated. Long was the struggle before it would consent to pass into its place of testifying to Christ, and to take its yoke off the shoulders of the brethren. Nor let us think that it is yet at an end. In the whole ascetical and ceremonial system of Rome we have the successor of the Jewish spirit and practice.

II. Still, then, the conflict is being maintained, and let us never forget it. We stand on the immovable basis of Gentile Christianity. We know no difference of race or colour, of sex or condition in life; to us there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Greek nor barbarian, bond nor free. The struggle lasts, but the future is not without largeness of promise and brightness of hope. Day by day men stand up among us witnessing to these truths; lives are spent and souls are called to glory; of Christ's fulness we are receiving and grace for grace. And as, close upon the end of the first century, a Christian father could make it his boast that there was not a known land where God the Father was not called on through His Son Jesus Christ, so we, past the noontide of the nineteenth great secular day, may boast, by the same grace of God, that there is not a land on the now revealed earth where the free doctrines of salvation by individual faith and individual sanctification are not proclaimed on the testimony of the Word of God.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 235.

REFERENCES: xi. 18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 44; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 545.

Chap. xi., vers. 19-26.

THE Church at Antioch.

I. This church was established by lay agency.

II. It was a church established among the Gentiles. The text marks a new epoch in the history of the kingdom of God

Jesus Christ had plainly intimated that the Gentiles also were to be admitted into the Christian fold. The Jewish Church was like the chrysalis containing life in an undeveloped state; the Christian Church is the chrysalis emerging in the winged butterfly,—it looks disdainfully upon boundaries and soars high over barriers.

III. This Gentile church was flourishing in grace. Every true minister will, like Barnabas, strive to promote the growth of grace and knowledge in the Church; and if he cannot accomplish the twofold work himself, he will, like Barnabas, seek another to help him. To our knowledge let us add grace; both are necessary in order to perfection in religion.

J. C. JONES, *Studies in the Acts*, p. 266.

REFERENCE: xi. 20.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ix., No. 385.

Chap. xi., vers. 20, 21.—"And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus," etc.

I. NOTICE the spontaneous impulse which these men obeyed. They find themselves rejoicing in a great Saviour-Friend. They see all around them men who need Him, and that is enough. They obey the promptings of the voice within, and lay the foundations of the first Gentile church. (1) Such a spontaneous impulse is ever the natural result of our own personal possession of Christ. A heart warmed by the love of Christ needs to express its love, and will give it forth, as certainly as light must radiate from its centre, or heat from a fire. (2) True kindliness of heart creates the same impulse. We cannot truly possess the treasure for ourselves without pity for those who have it not. (3) Loyalty to Christ creates the same impulse. If we are true to our Lord, we shall feel that we cannot but speak up and out for Him, and that all the more where His name is unloved and unhonoured.

II. This incident suggests the universal obligation on all Christians to make known Christ. These men were not officials In these early days the Church had a very loose organisation. But the fugitives in our narrative seem to have had among them none even of the humble officers of primitive times. Every Christian is solemnly bound to fulfil the Divine intention, and to take heed to the imperative command, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

III. Observe the simple message which they proclaimed. Their message was but the proclamation of their own personal

experience. They had found Jesus for themselves to be lover and Lord, friend and Saviour of their souls, and the joy they had received they sought to share with these Greeks, worshippers of gods and lords many.

IV. Notice the mighty Helper who prospered their work. "The hand of the Lord was with them." How little any of us know what shall become of our poor work, under His fostering care. How little these men knew that they were laying the foundations of the great change which was to transform the Christian community from a Jewish sect into a world-embracing church. Let us sow the seed, and He will give it a body as it pleaseth Him.

A. MACLAREN, *The Secret of Power*, p. 294.

REFERENCES: xi. 20, 21.—*Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 113; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 262. xi. 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1282. xi. 22, 23.—J. Keble, *Sermons for Saints' Days*, p. 234.

Chap. xi., ver. 23.—"Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."

I. NOTICE, first, what Barnabas saw. The "grace of God" here was very probably the specific meaning of the miraculous working of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Christ at work in men's hearts, making them pure and gentle, simple and unworldly, refining their characters, elevating their aims, toning their being into accord with the music of His life, is the true proof that men are Christians, and that communities of such are churches of His.

II. What he felt: "He was glad." It was a triumph of Christian principle to recognise the grace of God under new forms and in so strange a place; it was a greater triumph to hail it with rejoicing. As our eyes travel over the wide field of Christendom, and our memories go back over the long ages of the story of the Church, let gladness, and not wonder or reluctance, be the temper with which we see the graces of Christian character lifting their meek blossoms in any corners strange to us, and breathing their fragrance over the pastures of the wilderness.

III. What he said: "He exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." The first thing that strikes one about this all-sufficient directory for the Christian life is the emphasis with which it sets forth the Lord as the sole object to be grasped and held. The sum of all

objective religion is Christ; the sum of all subjective religion is cleaving to Him.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 257.

REFERENCES: xi. 23.—*Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 114; *Good Words*, vol. iii., p. 380; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 291.

Chap. xi., ver. 24.

CONSISTENCY of Human and Divine Affections.

I. There is no hint given that Barnabas acted otherwise than well and wisely in the course he pursued with reference to John Mark. He is declared to have been "a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," and St. Paul is related to have recognised after many years the excellence and profitableness of the young disciple whose inconstancy had offended him at first so deeply.

It may be asked what lesson or inference we may draw from this narrative. And I answer at once, that we gather from it the compatibility of heavenly with earthly duties, and the consistency of human with Divine affections. There is here set before us the example of a good man, and we behold him insist on reconciling the high responsibilities of his apostolic order with the claims which arise out of the ties of kindred—his natural affection for his sister's son. It was grievous, doubtless, that anything which that young man had done should have led to sharp contention; but we know from the sequel of the sacred story that it was Paul who had judged with undue severity, not Barnabas who had acted with undue indulgence. Here, then, the consistency of human with Divine affections is set before us.

II. Such teaching ought to bring something of comfort to beings like ourselves. God has placed us in this world, and made us what we are. It is *He* who has surrounded us with such a curious and complicated network of relationships, duties, ties. And it is incredible that these ought to be considered in the light of instruments of our ruin, traps and snares in our way. Rather as methods of our probation and helps to our perfection should every one of them be welcomed, weighed, and dealt with. For it is certain that there is room both for the claims of friendship and the ties of blood, on the one hand; for God's service and a due regard for His honour and glory on the other.

J. W. BURGON, *Ninety-one Short Sermons*, No. 58.

REFERENCES: xi. 24.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 338; J. A.

Picton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 273; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 305. xi. 26.—*Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 321; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 236; R. W. Church, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 163; see also *Discipline of the Christian Character*. xi. 29 —J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 480. xii. 1-3.—T. Gasquoine, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 364; J. Keble, *Sermons for Saints' Days*, p. 314. xii. 1-25.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 136. xii. 12.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 218; J. Keble, *Sermons for Saints' Days*, p. 214.

Chap. xii., ver. 15.—"Then said they, It is his angel."

THE Blessing of Death.

I. What was the meaning of these strange words—"It is his angel"? It was the opinion of many of the Fathers, and notably of St. Chrysostom, that the saying is a witness to the belief of the early Church in the existence of guardian angels, as if each Christian were under the care of a spiritual being, like the genius of whom the poet Horace writes:

"Natale comes qui temperat astrum"—

a being who was, as it were, a sort of higher self, who guided his life, who was associated with him in every joy and every sorrow, and who, on supreme occasions, but none knew how or when or why, would assume the likeness of his personality. But there is another view, which is the more perhaps to be considered as it is the view of Waterland, expressed in the fifth sermon of his second volume, viz., that when the surviving disciples said of St. Peter, "It is his angel," they thought that he was dead, and that it was his spirit, or, as we should say, his apparition, which Rhoda had seen and seemed to recognise at the gate. And, if so, one is led in the light of this verse to dwell for a moment upon the laws of communion between the living and the dead; for, perhaps to all of us, there is no more touching subject than this as life grows older, and they whom we loved the most on earth are ever drifting from us to the shadowy land. "It is not only when men are next to us that they are nearest—*Nicht nur zusammen wenn sie beisammen sind*, as Goethe nobly says in Egmont, but the distant too and the departed are alive for us." Has God one blessing only—the blessing of life? or is there healing in the wings of the angel of death? Shall we shrink from death as the Greeks in Herder's simile, like children covering their eyes with their hands, to hide its horror? or may we welcome it as an angel of the All-

merciful, although it robs us of our best and best-beloved, and say in the spirit of St. Francis, "My sister Death"?

II. There are some purposes which cannot be wrought out by life, but must needs be accomplished by death. It is not the faiths for which men are ready to argue, although they forge never so cunning a chain of arguments; it is the faiths for which they die that conquer the world. God buries His workmen, but carries on His work. Nay, He makes their very death a strength and solace to the generations which are the heirs of their high purpose.

J. E. C. WELLDON, *The Spiritual Life*, p. 193.

Chap. xiii., vers. 2, 3.—"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them," etc.

THE Heroism of Foreign Missions.

I. The first element of heroism is the quality of ideality—the power, that is, of getting hold of the idea of any cause or occupation, or of life in general, so that the cause, the occupation, or life becomes a living thing to which a man may give himself with all his powers. That quality of ideality is the essential thing in heroism. Along with this primary quality of heroism there go two others, closely related to it. They are magnanimity and bravery. These qualities make the heroes. These are what glorify certain lives that stand through history as the lights and beacons of mankind.

II. If Christianity is heroic life, the missionary work is heroic Christianity. This arises not from any mere circumstances of personal privation which attach to the missionary life, but because the missionary life has most closely seized, and most tenaciously holds and lives by, the essential central life-idea of Christianity. What is that idea? That man is the child of God. The true Christian idealist is he whose conception of man as the redeemed child of God has taken all his life, and moulded it in new shapes, planted it in new places, so filled and inspired it, that, like the Spirit of God in Elijah, it has taken it up and carried it where it never would have chosen to go of its lower will.

III. The missionary life is heroic, not because of the pains it suffers, but because of the essential character it bears. Pain is the aureole, but not the sainthood. So they have marched of

old, the missionaries of all the ages of the religion of the Incarnation and the Cross, idealists, believers, magnanimous and brave, the heroes of our faith. They have been heroes because of their faith, because their souls supremely believed in and their lives were supremely given to Christ.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *The Candle of the Lord*, p. 163.

REFERENCES: xiii. 2, 3.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 24. xiii. 4.—*Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 308. xiii. 7.—J. M. Charlton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 113; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 429.

Chap. xiii., ver. 9.—"Saul (who is also called Paul)."

THE assumption of the name of Paul instead of the name of Saul stood in some relation to his missionary work, and was intended in some sense as a memorial of his first victory in the preaching of the gospel.

I. The new name expresses a new nature. The central heart of Christianity is the possession of a new life, communicated to us through faith in that Son of God who is the Lord of the spirit. Wheresoever there is a true faith, there is a new nature. A change which needs a new name must be a profound change. Has our Christianity revolutionised our nature in any such fashion?

II. We may take this change of name as being expressive of a life's work. *Paul* is a Roman name. He strips himself of his Jewish connections and relationships. His fellow-countrymen who lived among the Gentiles were in the habit of doing the same thing; but they carried *both* their names—their Jewish for use amongst their own people, their Gentile one for use amongst Gentiles. Paul seems to have altogether disused his old name Saul. It was almost equivalent to seceding from Judaism. We may, from the change in the Apostle's name, gather this lesson, never out of date, that the only way to help people is to go down to their level. If you want to bless men, you must identify yourself with them.

III. The change of name is a memorial of victory. The name is that of his first convert. He takes it, as I suppose, because it seemed to him such a blessed thing that at the very moment when he began to sow God helped him to reap. Paul names himself from the first victory that God gave him to win, and so, as it were, carries ever at his breast a memorial of the wonder that through him it had been given to preach, and that not without success, amongst the Gentiles the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

IV. This change of name is an index of the spirit of a life's work. "Paul" means "little"; "Saul" means "desired." He abandons the name that prophesied of favour and honour, to adopt a name that bears upon its very front a profession of humility. His very name is the condensation into a word of his abiding conviction, "I am less than the least of all saints." So, for all hope, for all success in our work, for all growth in Christian grace and character, this disposition of lowly self-abasement. And, above all, learn this—that unless you have the new life, the life of God in your hearts, you have no life at all.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, May 7th, 1885.

REFERENCE: xiii. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1781.

Chap. xiii., ver. 13.—"John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem."

I. CONSIDER first the apostasy of John Mark. It was not a departure from Christ, but it was a departure from very plain duty. And if you will notice the point of time at which Mark threw up the work, you will see the reason for his doing so. The first place to which the bold evangelists went was Cyprus. Barnabas was a native of Cyprus; therefore, no doubt, partly, the selection of this place to begin their assault on heathenism. For the same reason, because it was the native place of his relative, it would be very easy work for John Mark as long as they stopped in Cyprus among his friends, with people that knew him, and with whom, no doubt, he was familiar. And, as soon as they crossed the strait that separated the island from the mainland, and set foot upon the soil of Asia Minor, so soon this man turns tail,—like some recruit that goes into battle full of fervour, but, as soon as the bullets begin to "ping," makes the best of his way to the rear. How like this story is to the experience of hundreds and thousands of young Christians! Let us all ponder the lesson, and see to it that no repetition of the apostasy of this man darken our Christian lives and sodden our Christian conscience.

II. Look next at Mark's eclipse. Paul and Barnabas differed about how to treat the renegade. Which of them was right? Barnabas' highest quality, as far as we know, was a certain kind of broad generosity and rejoicing to discern good in all men. He was a "son of consolation." The gentle kindness of his natural disposition, added to the ties of relationship, influenced him in his wish regarding his cousin Mark. He made a mistake.

It would have been the cruellest thing that could have been done to his relative to have put him back again without acknowledgment, without repentance, without riding quarantine for a bit and holding his tongue for awhile. He would not then have known his fault as he ought to have known it, and so there would never have been the chance of his conquering it. Mark's eclipse teaches us the lesson that the punishment for shirking work is to be denied work.

III. Consider the process of recovery. There is only one road, with well-marked stages, by which a backsliding or apostate Christian can return to his Master; and that road has three halting-places on it, through which our heart must pass if it have wandered from its early faith and falsified its first professions. The first of them is the consciousness of the fall, the second is the resort to the Master for forgiveness, the third is the deepened consecration to Him.

IV. Notice the reinstatement of the penitent renegade. Even early failures, recognised and repented of, may make a man better fitted for the tasks that he once fled from. The past is no specimen of what the future may be. The page that is yet to be written need have none of the blots of the page that we have turned over shining through it. God works with broken reeds, and through them breathes His sweetest music.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, Dec. 23rd, 1886.

REFERENCES: xiii. 16-21.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 490. xiii. 19, 20.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. vii., p. 198. xiii. 24.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 99. xiii. 26.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 189. xiii. 32.—J. Aldis, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 353.

Chap. xiii., ver. 36.

LIFE the Service of a Generation.

I. "He served his generation." The expression is vague till we interpret it. To one of us it may seem a small thing to have the possibilities of life confined within the limits of a single generation. We may have formed a grander conception of the capabilities of a life—our own or another's. We may have dreamed of far-reaching consequences to a church or a country, to literature or history, and thus to the world itself, from the fact that a certain person has lived and moved and had his being upon the face of the earth from which he was taken. But, speaking of average men, and of men above the average, it is true, painfully true, that they can at the best serve but one generation, and then must see corruption. Great ability, great

knowledge, great sagacity, great personal influence, great oratory, great generalship, great statesmanship—all are of the generation.

II. Shall we count this a small thing? Is it not enough if it can be said with truth of any man? If there is here the reproof of human vanity, is there not also here the repose of human restlessness? The service of the generation is capable of every possible variety. It is to fill the post assigned with diligence, with seriousness, with unselfishness, with God in sight. No one touches his generation at more than a few points; most touch it but at one. That point of contact is the place of service.

III. "He served his generation." In doing so he served God's counsel concerning himself. David, in his shepherd vigils in the hills around Bethlehem; David, exiled and outlawed by the king whom he loved through all; David, meditating his psalms, immortal in their use for churches and solitudes; David, at last anointed king, to reign seven years in Hebron and thirty and three in Jerusalem, was the subject, all through these vicissitudes, of a changeless will and counsel, which he persistently, though with frightful aberrations, served through all. So has it been with lesser lives and less illustrious fortunes. We, we ourselves, in our childhoods and manhoods, in our advancements and disappointments, in our little enterprises and less achievements, have been serving a counsel, and that of God. Oh, let us feel as we ought the mighty honour! These lives are trivial and uneventful, but they have been the subject of thought in heaven: let us live them well. Let us fulfil their high destiny. Enough, if of one of us this may be the record: "He served the counsel of God, and he fell asleep."

C. J. VAUGHAN, *University Sermons*, p. 511.

REFERENCES: xiii. 36.—W. Arthur, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 97; W. Braden, *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 152; J. P. Chown, *Ibid.*, vol. ix., p. 113; S. G. Matthews, *Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 8.

Chap. xiii., ver. 38.—**"Be it known unto you . . . that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."**

I. How little the word "forgiveness" is understood! There cannot be forgiveness until there has been the consent of two parties. We sometimes have said, in our ignorance, "Why does not God forgive all men and make an end of sin?" *He cannot.* You yourself cannot. It is a moral impossibility

There is an immoral nobleness. Do you care nothing for sin? Then you are immoral. Do you treat crime lightly? Then you are not to be trusted with the interests of society. Forgiveness is not a one-sided affair. There must be consent of parties. This is plainly declared in the revelation of Divine truth. Our hearts must be melted into contrition; there must be tears of penitence in our very hearts; there must be a sob of contrition, a sigh of self-accusation, an utter renunciation of self-help. Then will take place, in the name of Christ, and at the foot of the cross of Christ, the great transaction which liberates men from the captivity of sin.

II. When God forgives—what happens? When God forgives, God forgets. That is *complete* forgiveness. Where there is no forgetting there is no forgiving. What does God do with our sins when He has forgiven them? He casts them behind Him. "Behind God?" Yes. *Where* is that? These are figures—poor and lame, as all figures must be in such a case—which, however, are meant to indicate the utterness, the completeness, the grandeur of the great act of Divine pardon. We are saved by love. Love, when truly understood, will be found but another term for faith—faith completed, faith alive, faith at its sublimest point. It does appear to be infinitely impossible that sin can ever be rubbed out. But the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin; gets into the secret places of our heart, finds out our hidden iniquities and our concealed desires, and works its gracious ministry there, until we become without spot or wrinkle or any such thing—a glorious Church.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 193.

REFERENCES: xiii. 38, 39.—J. Natt, *Posthumous Sermons*, p. 141. xiii. 39.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 136. xiii. 42.—J. W. Lance, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 261. xiii. 43.—J. Kelly, *Ibid.*, p. 324. xiii. 46.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 29; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 292. xiii. 48.—Legge, *Christian World Pulpit*, vo. xxx., p. 291. xiii. 49.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 76. xiii. 52.—J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix. p. 136. xiv. 2, 3.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 220. xiv. 3.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 390. xiv. 8-20.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 430. xiv. 9, 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 559. xiv. 11.—A. P. Peabody, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 170. xiv. 13-15.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 374. xiv. 17.—R. D. P. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 1st series, p. 226; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 124; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 28.

Chap. xiv., ver. 22.—"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

THE Way to the Kingdom.

"We must enter the kingdom through tribulation."

I. For probation. A man must be proved before he can be approved. In the very nature of the case, trial precedes approbation. A thing or, still more, a man may look fair, and be useless. God tries and trains men before and for advancement. The advancement is to be very great—glory, in exceeding weight; the trial must be very true. And in order to be true it must be severe and searching. Therefore, in general, the individual life is so composed and arranged that it is. Each man's life is so adjusted in its circumstances and so measured as to its length as to constitute on the whole a complete probation for the man. There is that probably in every one of us which only suffering in some form can touch and try.

II. We must—for purification. The probation is always with a view to purification, with, on God's part, a pressure and a tendency that way. If we take the whole life, as holding both darkness and affliction in it, it is still true that in and by the whole life-discipline God designeth not the destruction of any man. His fires are hot, but they are all purifying. He Himself is a consuming fire only to what is evil; He is a purifying and preserving fire to all that is good.

III. We must—in order to the attainment of that which every Christian soul longs for and feels to be of the essence of its life: viz., a real and deep fellowship in Christ. Christian fellowship is life in Christ. "Abide in Me, and I in you." If there be one element of this human life more needful than another for the perfecting of a sanctifying fellowship between the Saviour and the soul, it is the element of suffering. Therefore it is the unchanging law that we bear about with us in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that we die daily to Him, that we are killed all the day long. By such dying nourishment is sent down to the very roots of life. Penitence feeds purity. The pangs exalt the joys. Many a one has felt in the depths of trial, amid the straits of tribulation, that Christ is nearer than He had ever been before, nearer than they had thought it possible He would ever come.

IV. We must—"for the sake of others." It is not possible to doubt that God often uses the suffering of one for the sanctifying of another. Just as there are workers in life—

fathers of families and men who naturally take much of the stress of things, while those dependent on them and those around share largely in the benefit—so it seems quite certain that there are souls called, with special calling, to suffer, not alone, nor perhaps chiefly that they may themselves be purified, but rather that others may receive the benefit. As no man liveth, as no man dieth, so no man suffereth, to himself. Courage, then, weary one. Thou too art sowing good seed in faith and gentleness and submission, which will find good soil in many hearts and come to harvest after many days.

A. RALEIGH, *The Little Sanctuary*, p. 22.

AFFLICTION no Proof of Sonship.

I. There is no expiatory power or virtue in our sufferings; they make no atonement. If endured patiently, they leave in full force the incurred penalties of God's law; if endured impatiently, they but incur fresh penalties. We must not think that because many are the troubles of the righteous every one that has many troubles must therefore be righteous. While all are aware that sorrow is fastened to sin, whether in the way of appointed judgments or of natural consequences, it may and must be continually happening that calamities beset those who all the while are living in alienation from God; that tears are the portion day and night of men who have no scriptural ground for hope that God will finally wipe away all tears from their eyes; and nevertheless, the proposition of our text may be unimpeached as announcing an ordinary if not invariable appointment, "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

II. There is, however, a wholly different though equally erroneous inference which may be drawn from our text and from other passages of Scripture which, in like manner, associate suffering with piety. When a man who is not called to extraordinary trials, whose course of life on the whole is one of evenness and peace, when he reads of entering the kingdom through much tribulation there is great likelihood of his suspecting that he is destitute of the chief evidence of being a child of God. Be not impatient for the coming of trial, but keep always praying that when it comes you may have patience for its endurance. It will come soon enough; sooner, perhaps, than you will be ready to meet it. And in the meantime thou canst not justly say thou hast not trial: the want of trial is thy trial; unbroken sunshine may be a trial as well as continued

strife. Ah! why not even a greater, as making a man doubtful of his calling and election? While uninterrupted prosperity may be the portion of a wicked man, it may also be the portion of a righteous man. With the wicked it will nourish presumption and indifference to religion; with the righteous it will suggest fears as to acceptance with God; and these fears, springing from the thought that the believer has not trial enough, may themselves constitute no uncommon trial.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1529.

Chap. xiv., ver. 22.—"We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

THE expression "through many tribulations," as connected with entering God's kingdom, is used in the sense of passing or travelling through—as if they lay about our road, and we as pilgrims were advancing on in the midst of them. And this is at least an encouraging similitude. It sets us forth as independent of, superior to, the tribulations, and sets them forth as our appointed way, but no more—not placed there to have the mastery over us, but to be faced and left behind, just as the traveller faces and leaves behind the dangers or rough places of his road. It is then through many of these gallings and frettings, these narrow inlets or these pressing burdens, that our way must be made to the land of everlasting rest and peace. Let us trace the fact in the rise and progress of the spiritual life.

I. First of all, strait is the gate itself that leadeth unto life; and when our Lord chose this expression He intended doubtless to represent not only the fewness of those who go in thereat, but the fact that to each man it proves narrow and uninviting. Through one mental process in the main do men enter into the life of the spirit. It is a humbling process.

II. The tribulations of God's people may be distinguished into *essential* and *incidental*—that which sooner or later, with less or more intensity, every Christian must feel, and that into which he is liable, in the providence of his heavenly Father from varying circumstances, to be thrown. (1) There is a certain beaten track of sorrow which must be travelled by every son of God. The Christian in every class of life must prepare himself for fightings without and for fears within. Through distress of heart and wrenching asunder of earthly ties in some shape or other lies every one's path to the kingdom. (2) Incidental tribulations are the sicknesses and dejections and bereave-

ments of the people of God. These troubles are, in fact, our highest privileges. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope."

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 131.

REFERENCES: xiv. 22.—J. Kelly, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 324; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 68; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 294; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 217. xv. 1-29.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vii., p. 11.

Chap. xv., ver. 9.—"Purifying their hearts by faith."

THE three great outbreakings of selfishness in our unrenewed nature are: (1) Pride—the inordinate valuing of ourselves; (2) Covetousness—the inordinate valuing of created objects; (3) Self-indulgence—the inordinate valuing of that which created objects can bring us. From each of these justifying faith in Christ purifies our hearts. Take

I. Pride. This is setting up the honour of self above the honour of God. It is self-worship, and refuses to recognise any righteousness but self-righteousness. Now watch the effect of justifying faith on this sin. What is the very prime object of faith? What do I receive into my heart if I realise Christ's work for me? Is it not this, that the mighty God, He who is higher than the highest, laid aside all His glory and came down into the depth of humiliation for me? If I love Christ, if I am changed into Christ, how can I be proud? how can I honour self, worship self? And accordingly we see that pride is the very first obstacle that must be cleared away before a man can believe on Christ. The life of faith is the death of pride.

II. Covetousness. The opposite of covetousness is the love which imparts to others. The very highest example of this love is He on whom justifying faith is fixed. If my inner regards are really fixed on Him who gave all He had, yea Himself, for me; if this blessed self-devotion of Christ be really apprehended in my heart; if I be really fused into and united with such a course as this, where is there room in me for covetous desires?

III. Self-indulgence. Has faith a charm to draw the eye from its desire—a gem before which the jewels of this earth are dull? Yes, for who is its object? Is it not He who has solemnly told us that none can be His disciple without daily self-denial? The Christian who lives by faith in Christ can and does enjoy ir the best and highest sense the true delight of social intercourse, the true kindnesses of companionship; but

the Christian who lives by faith in Christ cannot be a seeker of pleasure, cannot surrender his noble privilege of self-denial, in the bondage in which he sees the children of the world fettered. Faith is an enemy to self-indulgence no less than to pride and covetousness.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 206.

REFERENCES: xv. 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1350. xv. 11.—*Ibid.*, vol. xiii., No. 765; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 36. xv. 28.—J. J. S. Perowne, *Sermons*, p. 134. xv. 30, 31.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 4th series, p. 31. xv. 36.—*Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 51; W. Adamson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 163. xvi. 1.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 309.

Chap. xvi., ver. 9.—"And a vision appeared unto Paul in the night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us."

BEFORE every well-done work the vision comes. We dream before we accomplish. What is all our boyhood, that comes before our life, and thinks and pictures to itself what that life shall be, that fancies and resolves and is impatient—what is it but just the vision before the work, the dream of Europe coming to many a young life, as it sleeps at Troas, on the margin of the sea? The visions before the work; it is their strength that conquers the difficulties and lifts men up out of the failures, and redeems the tawdriness or squalidness of the labour that succeeds. The aspect of the man of Macedonia reveals the real state of the case with reference to the essential need of the human soul for the gospel.

I. The first need is a God to love and worship. If you are not to lose that highest reach of love and fear where, uniting, they make worship, must you not have God? Woe to the man who loses the faculty for worship, the faculty of honouring and fearing not merely something better than himself, but something which is the absolute best, the perfect good—his God! The life is gone out of his life when this is gone. There is a cloud upon his thought, a palsy on his action, a chill upon his love. Because you must worship, therefore you must have God.

II. But more than this. Every man needs not merely a God to worship, but also—taking the fact which meets us everywhere of an estrangement by sin between mankind and God—every man needs some power to turn him and bring him back, some reconciler, some saviour for his soul. There is an orphanage, a home-sickness of the heart which has gone up into

the ear of God, and called the Saviour, the Reconciler, to meet it by His wondrous life and death.

III. Man needs spiritual guidance. The power of the Holy Spirit! an everlasting spiritual pressure among men! what but that is the thing we want? The power of the Holy Ghost, by which every man who is in doubt may know what is right, every man whose soul is sick may be made spiritually whole, every weak man may be made a strong man—this is God's one sufficient answer to the endless appeal of man's spiritual life.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *The Candle of the Lord*, p. 91.

A CRY for Help.

I. Each one must have been struck with the beauty and the tenderness and the depth which there is in that word help. "Help us." It implies that there is, which I suppose there is in every living creature under heaven, a feeling consciously or unconsciously which looks out for help. Every one has his aspirations; in every one there is a standard higher than he can reach, a sense of something beyond him, which he sees and admires and wishes to be and cannot. It is the immortality of the man—it is the relic of the lost image—it is the cry of the void of a heart which once was filled. Weakness, miserable weakness, is the child of sin, and there are times when the hardest and the proudest feel it. You may assume it, every one who has not God sometimes has the thought, though it does not clothe itself in words—"Help us."

II. We hold that if a heathen man lives up to the light of his natural conscience, by that light of conscience he will be judged, and if he have obeyed it, he will not be condemned. But then the objection meets us, If this be so, is it not better to let the heathen alone? For if a man who follows the light of reason will not perish, and if to refuse Christ be the condemnation, and the responsibility therefore of knowing Christ so tremendous, surely they are safer as they are! If we, with all the assistance which we derive from education, from the piety of those about us, from the Bible, from the means of grace, find it so very difficult to do what is right, and to act out the dictates of our better mind, what must the difficulty be to a heathen, who has none of these, but all the counteracting influences of evil about him! Is not the gospel practically essential to the heathen, to enable him to fulfil the condition, on which alone he can escape eternal punishment? What the heathen want is help. There is a power abroad in the world to which nothing is really an

antagonistic force but Christ only. Let us then obey the more than mortal voice by which the little good that is in everything everywhere in itself pleads silently, in Christ cries loudly, "Come over and help us."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 51.

REFERENCES: xvi. 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 189; *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 115; J. Oswald Dykes, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 296; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 124. xvi. 9-40.—*New Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 89. xvi. 13, 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix. No. 544. xvi. 14.—J. Burton, *Christian Life and Truth*, p. 44; J. C. Postans, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 404; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 85.

Chap. xvi., vers. 14, 15.

The Conversion of Lydia.

I. Lydia was listening: "And a certain woman named Lydia, heard us." Great stress is laid in the Bible on hearing: "Faith cometh by hearing."

II. Lydia listened attentively. She paid heed—eagerly laid hold of the great truths enunciated by the Apostle. If you lay hold of the truth, the truth will lay hold of you. Once the hearers of the gospel reach this stage of close, anxious attention, this eager grasping of the truth, there is every reason to believe they will be led on to a full and saving knowledge of it.

III. She listened attentively in her heart: "Whose heart the Lord opened to attend." Life before light—hearts before heads: that is the fundamental principle of the gospel.

IV. Lydia was listening attentively with her heart opened.

V. Lydia listened attentively with her heart opened wide by the Lord. The text shows that the opening of her heart was (1) gradual, (2) gentle.

J. C. JONES, *Studies in the Acts*, p. 280.

REFERENCE: xvi. 16.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 227.

Chap. xvi., vers. 29-31.

NOTE:—

I. What a "manifold wisdom" is the wisdom of God! how infinitely various are His ways in the work of the conversion of souls and the bringing of sinners to Himself! One is never more struck with this than in comparing the two records of conversion which this chapter contains and which befel in the same city—the conversion of Lydia and the conversion of the Philippian jailer. The first, what a quiet work!—the evening dews do not light more gently, more imperceptibly

on the earth than did the doctrine of the Lord light and distil upon her heart. He that hath the key of David with a touch of the key caused the chambers of her heart to fly open, so that she attended unto the things spoken of Paul, and almost without an effort, for so it would appear, was born into the kingdom of God. Contrast this with the mighty though brief birth-pang with which the jailer was born into the same kingdom, the earthquake of fear which shook his soul, the agony of terror out of which he cried, "What must I do to be saved?"

II. And what is the lesson which we may draw from this comparison and contrast? It is this. Let none of us make rules for conversion, either in our own case or in that of others; how it should come about, and what exactly are the successive stages of the process through which one who is brought to God must pass; so that if any has not passed exactly through these we will not believe that the work has been wrought in him at all. No man is in this matter in all things a pattern to others. God is greater than our rules; He refuses to be shut in by them. There is a boundless, inexhaustible originality in His methods of dealing with souls. All which concerns thee—and this does concern thee more than everything besides—is this, namely, that the thing itself shall have been done, and that thou shalt have indeed asked the great question, "What must I do to be saved?" and that thou shalt have received into thine heart of hearts the all-including, answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," and shalt have so received it, that out of this there shall be now unfolding itself in thee a life of conformity to the will of God, thou walking in all those good works which He had prepared for thee to walk in.

R. C. TRENCH, *Sermons in Ireland*, p. 142.

REFERENCES: xvi. *Preacher's* 30.—*Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 306; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 1. xvi., 30, 31.—J. Burton, *Christian Life and Truth*, p. 146; J. Natt, *Posthumous Sermons*, p. 152; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 55. xvi. 31.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 293; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 127; vol. viii., p. 147; H. Robjohns, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 280; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol ii., p. 233; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 47. xvi. 32-4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 1019.

Chap. xvi., ver. 40.—"And when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed."

THE Gospel brought into Europe.

We have in this story:—

I. The old lesson of the power of small things, or rather

the power of the earnest heart and steady purpose working by means of common things. Although the Apostle has come by Divine sanction to far-famed Philippi, he comes like an ordinary traveller, goes out quietly to the banks of the little stream, where he has heard that there is prayer, and even then he does not preach, but sits down and talks to the listening women. How many Christian people still have no other opportunity than just such as this, and could not use a greater if it were given. All they can do is to talk to a few simple folk, women or men, or young people. But how great the results may be! How one becomes many, and simplicity becomes grandeur! Call nothing little, call nothing common; if you can speak to fellow-mortals of Christ's grace and the Father's love, know that you are standing at the source of rivers of immortal life.

II. It is a notable thing that the first European convert is a woman. Lydia is a kind of personal Jerusalem—she is the mother of us all. She stands here at the gate of the Western continent, is the first to receive the blessing and to send it on. In that fact we have the pledge and actual beginning of woman's elevation. She is no longer to be drudge, slave, plaything to man. She is to enter the kingdom by his side. Christ's gospel is a kingdom of souls, of sacrifice, of virtues; and they stand highest in it who have the simplest faith, the largest charities, the tenderest hearts.

III. We have in the deliverance of the slave-girl another typical and prophetic circumstance. It would be almost universally allowed that the two most important social revolutions produced by Christianity are the amelioration of the condition of woman and the abolition of slavery. And here in Philippi we have the second as well as the first.

IV. The conversion of the jailer, who was probably a Roman soldier, points to the influence that the Christian religion was destined to exert over law and political institutions and prevailing idolatries and civil governments. This conquest over a soldier and servant of Rome is indicative of the subjection of the great empire herself under the sway of the Cross.

V. The order of the conversions is worthy of notice. The proselyte, the Greek, the Roman—that has been the order of the diffusion of Christianity throughout the world; and it is so in principle at this day. We expect our first successes among those who have had some religious advantages, our

next among the susceptible around, and our last among the men of the world.

VI. Observe also the recognised importance of the family in this wonderful narrative. There are three converts and two of them bring their households with them. The family is to be, in God's plan, one organic whole, not a number of separate and jarring individualities.

VII. Finally, Jesus Christ stands out here, as everywhere, to be worshipped, trusted, loved, and followed. Believe on Him, and thou shalt be saved. Honour Him, and He will give thee honour. Open to Him thy house, and He will fill it with the fragrance of His presence.

A. RALEIGH, *From Dawn to the Perfect Day*, p. 265.

Chap. xvii., vers. 2-4.

CONSORTING with Paul and Silas.

I. Here is the chief object of Christian faith—the Lord Jesus carrying on in His very name the assurance of the things that are necessary for our life and salvation.

II. The means used to produce faith or persuasion are now almost the same as those employed at first—at least in Thessalonica and many other places. To preach Christ is to reason out of the Scriptures, to lay out the matter as it seems to ourselves, to press it home upon all whom it concerns; to remonstrate, expostulate, entreat and then to leave the issue with God.

III. The passage shows us along what line the reasoning usually went. It went towards proving out of the Scriptures that Jesus is Christ. We do not now need to pursue formally the same line of argument, unless as against Jews, who hold to their own Scriptures and reject our Christian conclusion. Substantially, however, our course is the same; our reasonings, our openings of Scripture, our allegations all tend Christwards.

IV. The faith is the same now as then: faith in Christ—in Christ the sufferer, the death-destroyer, the life-giver, the Redeemer of all trusting men.

V. The outward result of this faith or persuasion is, to some extent, the same as at first, and ought to be much more so than it is. They consorted with Paul and Silas. (1) It must always be good to consort with good men. (2) It must always be good to be associated as closely as possible with a good cause. (3) It must be good to escape from an equivocal

position. (4) It must be good to remove farther from danger. (5) It must be good to obey Divine commandment.

A. RALEIGH, *The Way to the City*, p. 284.

REFERENCES: xvii. 5.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 250. xvii. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 193; J. S. Pearsall, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 193. xvii. 10.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 329. xvii. 10, 11.—H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 12. xvii. 11.—J. Rawlinson, *Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 78; G. Dawson, *Sermons on Disputed Points*, p. 209; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 29. xvii. 11, 12.—J. Burton, *Christian Life and Truth*, p. 196. xvii. 12.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., pp. 36, 37; vol. vi., p. 182. xvii. 15.—*Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 60.

Chap. xvii., vers. 16, 17.

OBSERVE Three Things in this Passage.

I. What St. Paul saw at Athens. He saw a city wholly given to idolatry. Idols met his eye in every street. The temples of idol gods and goddesses occupied every prominent position. And yet this city, be it remembered, was probably the most favourable specimen of a heathen city which St. Paul could have seen. In proportion to its size it very likely contained the most learned, civilised, philosophical, highly educated, artistic, intellectual population on the face of the globe. But what was it in a religious point of view? The city of Socrates and Plato, the city of Solon and Pericles and Demosthenes, the city of mind and intellect, was wholly given to idolatry. If the true God was unknown at Athens, what must He have been in the darker places of the earth! We learn from the idolatry of Athens (1) the absolute need of a Divine revelation and of teaching from heaven; (2) that the highest intellectual training is no security against utter darkness in religion; (3) that the highest excellence in the material arts is no preservative against the grossest superstition. The men who conceived the sculptured friezes, which we know as the Elgin marbles, were trained and intellectual to the highest degree. And yet in religion these men were darkness itself. The sight which St. Paul saw at Athens is an unanswerable proof that man knows nothing which can do his soul good without a Divine revelation.

II. What St. Paul felt at Athens. (1) He was stirred with holy compassion. It moved his heart to see so many myriads perishing for lack of knowledge, without God, without Christ, having no hope, travelling in the broad road which leadeth to destruction. (2) He was stirred with holy sorrow. (3) He was stirred with holy indignation against sin and the devil. (4) He

was stirred with holy zeal for his Master's glory. These feelings which stirred the Apostle are a leading characteristic of men born of the Spirit. Where there is true grace there will always be tender concern for the souls of others. Where there is true sonship to God there will always be zeal for the Father's glory.

III. What St. Paul did at Athens. He was not the man to stand still and confer with flesh and blood in the face of a city full of idols. He might have reasoned with himself that he stood alone, that he was a Jew by birth, that he was a stranger in a strange land, that he had to oppose the rooted prejudices and associations of learned men, that to attack the old religion of a whole city was to beard the lion in his den, tha the doctrines of the gospel were little likely to be effective on minds steeped in Greek philosophy. But none of these thoughts seems to have crossed the mind of St. Paul. He saw souls perishing, he felt that life was short and time passing away, he had confidence in the power of his Master's message to meet every man's soul, he had received mercy himself, and knew not how to hold his peace. He acted at once, and what his hand found to do he did with his might. From St. Paul's behaviour at Athens we learn (1) that the grand subject of our teaching in every place ought to be Jesus Christ; (2) that we must never be afraid to stand alone and be solitary witnesses for Christ; (3) that we must boldly assert the supernatural element as an essential part of the Christian religion; (4) if we preach the gospel we may preach with perfect confidence that it will do good.

BISHOP RYLE, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Nov. 18th, 1880.

REFERENCES: xvii. 18.—J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 173; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 145; G. B. Johnson, *Ibid.*, vol. ix., p. 264; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 341.

Chap. xvii., ver. 19.—"And they took Paul, and brought him unto Areopagus."

I. IT may throw a fresh light on the study of the Bible if you look at it with this thought of the contrast and contest between religion and revelation. The Old Testament is not chiefly a record of the Divine origin and establishment and sanctions of a religion. To represent it as this is to lose sight of its most instructive aspect. The Jewish nation, when first they appear in the dawn of history, already were possessed of strong religious traditions and instincts, inherited from their less

enlightened far-off ancestors, and modified by the people with whom they had been brought in contact. The Old Testament must be studied as the record of a contest between the unenlightened religious instincts of the Jews and what for the present we may call the revelation of God made through the hearts and voices of men. Here lies the unending value of the Book, and the record terminates when the contest terminated—when religion was stereotyped and revelation was hushed. The natural growth of thought and revelation was strangled by the grasp of "religion."

II. Then after four centuries Christ came. And what did He come to do? To found a new religion? Surely not. He came to renew and continue the long-lost revelation. He came not to destroy, but to fulfil. He came as one of the prophets, though far greater than any prophet. And He came as the great revealer of God.

The revelation of God in Christ was preached to nations that had gone through very different discipline, and the seed fell on very different soils. But one experience that it met with was universal—it found everywhere the religious instinct developed. And therefore everywhere the old contest was renewed between revelation and religion; the records of ecclesiastical history are the records of the contest between the higher light and the lower instinct in the Christian centuries, just as the Old Testament is the record of a similar contest in the pre-Christian centuries. Religion is multiform, transient, external; revelation is one, progressive and spiritual. The Christian religion is *allerveränderlichste*, the most mutable of all things, as has well been said by Rothe, and almost the same thing has been said by Newman. The Christian revelation is the most indestructible of things: it is light, it is life, it is growth, it is πνεῦμα, it is spirit.

J. M. WILSON, *Contributions to Religious Thought*, p. 82.

REFERENCES: xvii. 19.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. xxv., p. 216, P. Brooks, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 14; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 310; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 133.

Chap. xvii., ver. 20.

GOD of the Times of Ignorance.

Notice three general principles which we shall do well to have clearly in mind always when we read our Bibles.

I. There is a progress in the Divine revelation in the Bible, --a progress from limited to fuller revelation, from smaller to

larger knowledge, from more contracted to expanded views of God and truth. The Bible is the record of a revelation given, as we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "at sundry times and in divers manners." There is a progress from the morality which must be held in leading strings, kept to duty by specific rules and minute precepts, to the freedom with which Christ makes His disciples free, throwing them upon the guidance of the conscience, enlightened by the Spirit. The revelation of God and the unfolding of character in Scripture are as the progress from starlight to the brightness of noon.

II. The principle of accommodation. We must never forget that we as Christians read the Bible from the New Testament standpoint, and that consequently, if we read the Old Testament expecting to find New Testament standards and principles in operation there, we shall be constantly disappointed and puzzled. For reasons of His own God adapted His revelations to men as they were. And we ourselves stand upon the same basis. There is more in revelation than we have yet seen, there is a glory to be revealed; we might as properly ask why God does not fit us at once to receive the full weight of glory as it comes down upon a heavenly nature. We know simply that this is not His way, that we could not bear it if it were revealed.

III. Through this partial, growing, and accommodated revelation God is continually working toward His own perfect ideal.

M. R. VINCENT, *God and Bread*, p. 323.

REFERENCES: xvii. 22.—G. Martin, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 270; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 95; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 265. xvii. 23.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 27; *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 116; J. Legge, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 76; E. Medley, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvii., p. 295; R. Duckworth, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxii., p. 145. xvii. 26.—J. Greenhough, *Ibid.*, p. 246; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 6; *Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 99. xvii. 26, 27.—A. M. Fairbairn, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 321; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvi., p. 405; T. S. Bonney, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 27.

Chap. xvii., ver. 23.

PAUL declared to the Athenians the unknown God: (1) in His relation to nature, (2) in His relation to man.

I. God in relation to nature. (1) The Apostle begins by affirming that God made the world and all things therein—that He was the Creator of the universe. (2) This idea means that God made the world in relation to its matter.

(3) God made the world, not only in its matter, but also in its laws. (4) Having created the world God is still present in it as its sovereign Lord and Director.

From these truths two valuable lessons are deduced: (*a*) God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, (*b*) He is not worshipped or served with men's hands as though He needed anything.

II. God in His relation to man. (1) Paul begins here again by affirming that God made man, and he proclaims the unity of the human race. (2) Having made men, the Divine Being continues to rule them. He did not heartlessly fling them upon the world to be the sport of chance, but determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation. (3) The Apostle announces a nearer relation still: he declares God to be the Father of men. "We are also His offspring."

J. C. JONES, *Studies in the Acts*, p. 303.

REFERENCES: xvi. 24-34.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 152; xvi. 25-7.—*Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 80. xvi. 25-40.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 198.

Chap. xvii., vers. 26-31.

ST. PAUL at Athens.

I. The Jewish nation had existed to be a witness for this universal fellowship among the nations. It had existed as a witness against that which tended to divide them and set them at war. It existed to say, "The living and true God has created you all to be one." No one thought has been awakened in your minds without His teaching and guidance. I, the Jew, the child of Abraham, stand forth to make that claim on behalf of the God whom I worship. I, the Jew, the child of Abraham, stand forth to declare that you, the men of Athens, have had a Divine vocation, that the God of all has appointed you to play a distinct and a very remarkable part in His great drama."

II. But why has God chosen out the particular nations? Why has He ordered the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation? Here is St. Paul's answer: "That they may seek the Lord, if haply they may feel after Him and find Him." According to this explanation of an inspired apostle, it was God Himself who stirred up the thoughts and inquiries of men about His Being and nature. Without His first word they could not have been; without His continual presence and inspiration they must have ceased altogether.

III. Bold as this statement is, it is less startling than the words which follow. We are so familiar with them, they have

so leavened the dialect of Christendom, that we do not consider how awful they are in themselves, how much more remarkable they are for the place in which they were uttered, how they contradict some of our most approved religious and philosophical maxims. "Though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being." St. Paul regarded this statement as the one great protest against Pantheism, and all other evil tendencies, to which the Athenian was liable; He shows the Athenians that God was their Father. It was because He was the Father of their spirits—because they were spiritual beings created in His spiritual likeness, created to feel after Him and find Him—it was therefore that the conceiving Him under any of these notions of theirs, the casting Him in any material shape, was so degrading and abominable. The whole burning indignation of the Jew against the gods of the hills and groves comes forth in this assertion, which is nevertheless so full of tenderness for every heathen, and which could only have been uttered by one who believed that God had loved the whole world, and had sent His Son to take upon Him the nature of the dweller in Athens as much as of the dweller in Jerusalem.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 111.

Chap. xvii., ver. 27.

THE Voice of History.

I. History is the preacher of God. We may learn from it just the refutation of the fool when he hath said in his heart "There is no God." The blind man might as well assert that there is no sun. All history, all Scripture, all nature, all experience, refutes him. Well might the baffled and dying Julian exclaim, "O Galilean, thou hast conquered!" Could there be two more stupendous proofs of the presence of God in history than Christianity and Christendom? What can account for so superb a triumph of the merest weakness? One fact, and one fact only—the power of Christ's resurrection.

II. And history, which is the preacher of God, is also a preacher of judgment. How often has God confounded the Babels and dashed in pieces the invincible despotisms of the world! God is not, as Napoleon said, on the side of the biggest battalions. Alexander, the Czar of Russia, understood the truth if Napoleon did not, and on his commemorative medal were carved the words, "Not to me, not to us, but unto Thy name."

III. History is the preacher of great moral verities. A

nation morally corrupt is invariably a nation physically weak. History is a voice ever sounding across the centuries the eternal distinctions of right and wrong. Opinions alter, manners change, creeds rise and fall, but the moral law is written on the tablets of eternity. For every false word and unrighteous deed, for cruelty or oppression, for lust or vanity, the price has to be paid to the end. Justice and truth alone endure and live; injustice and falsehood may be long-lived, but doomsday comes to them at last.

F. W. FARRAR, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 353.

REFERENCES: xvii. 27.—G. Gilfillan, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 257; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 589; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 84.

Chap. xvii., ver. 28.

I. SINCE God is everywhere, we move, speak, act, think *in* God. We rise up, we lie down, we eat, we drink, we work, we rest, we speak, in God, we pray to God, or—men forget God; not only with God's eye ever upon us, as much upon us as if in the whole circuit of created beings there were, besides God, no other living being but our one self; not only with that all-beholding Eye resting upon us, seeing every motion of our frames, every emotion of our hearts, every thought before it is yet framed, every word when as yet unspoken; but all we do, think, speak, by night or by day, we do, think, speak *in* God, encompassed by God. "*In* God we live and move." This might be very blessed, the bliss almost of the blessed in heaven. But it has its awful sides also. Since we think, speak, act *in* God, then every sin which men commit—the foulest, most cruel, most loathsome, most contrary to the nature which God formed—is committed *in* God. It cannot be otherwise. God not only sees *through* the darkness, He is *in* it. There He is, where thou turnest. Thou canst not turn away from God except to meet God. Thou canst turn away from His love, yet only to meet Him in His displeasure. Turn, then, in sorrow from thy sin, and thou wilt meet Him and see Him forgiving thee.

II. Since, then, all is of God and in God, since we ourselves, if our souls are alive, are *in* Christ and through Christ in God, there is no room to claim anything as our own. To claim any gift of God as our own is to rob God. But who could wish to hold anything of his own? How much holier, deeper, more blessed, more full of love, is it to draw every breath of our lives in Him, as supplying it; to move around

Him as the centre of our being, and who gives us power to move. As in nature even the strength which men abuse against God is, in every separate act, still continued to them by God whom they offend, so in grace, not only the general power to do acts well-pleasing to God is given and upheld by God, but each act wherewith, from the sacrifice of Abel until now, God has been well-pleased, has been done through the power of His grace put forth in men by Him, and by Him perfected in them.

E. B. PUSEY, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 372.

REFERENCES: xvii. 28-30.—R. S. Candlish, *Scripture Characters and Miscellanies*, p. 493. xvii. 29.—J. Fraser, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 230. xvii. 30.—*Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 117; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 26. xvii. 30, 31.—J. Natt, *Posthumous Sermons*, p. 124; E. White, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 344; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. x., p. 104. xvii. 31.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 33.

Chap. xvii., ver. 32.

THE Resurrection of the Dead.

Observe:—

I. That the resurrection is exhibited in the Bible, not as the speculative truth which must be believed because taught, but with which otherwise we have no close concern: it is rather set forth as so intimately bound up with our salvation, that to prove it false were to prove the human race unredeemed. I look on the wondrous exhibitions of creative wisdom and might, and I gather from the magnificent spectacle witness in abundance that a resurrection is possible.

II. Consider the evidence which we have of the resurrection of Christ. When we show that the chosen witnesses proved by their endurances that they were not deceivers and that they enjoyed such opportunities of assurance that they could not themselves have been deceived, we seem to place the resurrection of our Lord, so far as testimony is concerned, beyond the reach of cavil. We feel that it was a scorn which nothing could justify and a hesitation which must yield so soon as evidence was examined, when we find it expressed in the words of the text, "When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter."

III. The grand characteristic of our resurrection bodies is to be the likeness of the glorified body of Christ. Whilst yet a

wrestler with principalities and powers the believer in Christ is opposed by his own flesh, and all his corporeal senses take part with the foes who would withstand him as he presses on to immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, the body will be spiritual, not natural; regenerated flesh, sanctified matter; its every organ a minister of righteousness, its every sense an inlet for the majesty of God. Matter shall rival spirit in consecration to the Lord, and the very walls of the temple be instinct with holiness and breathe of duty.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2553.

REFERENCES: xvii. 32-4.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 369. xviii. 3.—J. Thain Davidson, *Talks with Young Men*, p. 47. xviii. 9, 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1566; W. Braden, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 68. xviii. 9-11.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 315. xviii. 10.—W. Baird, *The Hallowing of our Common Life*, p. 62.

Chap. xviii., ver. 17.—"And Gallio cared for none of these things."

I. GALLIO was a Roman of a gentler than Roman type. His brother, the great Seneca, speaks of the wonderful charm of his character, and declares that they who loved him with all their love loved him at best too little. It is well for us to read in this conflict of description the mighty measureless discrepancy between man's judgment and God's. The beauty is the bane. Gallio's friends love him for the sweetness which in God's sight is feebleness; and Gallio the well-beloved, exposed to the sunlight of Bible photography, becomes to the Church of all time Gallio the indifferent.

II. In the particular instance Gallio was not to blame. A stranger is dragged before the proconsul's tribunal on a charge which the magistrate sees to be at once religious and sectarian. These Jews are trading upon toleration to invoke intolerance. Their religion is recognised by the law, and they are to be judges of the exact shape and colour, the precise limit and margin, of the protecting recognition. Orthodox Judaism, yes; Nonconformist Judaism, no. "This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law." The magistrate interposes. Without calling on the accused he dismisses the case. The decision was right, but not the motive. The searcher of hearts sees not there the sentence of justice, but only that utter indifference to truth and falsehood which makes it as easy to be impartial as earnestness finds it difficult

III. We see indifference in a thousand forms and due to a thousand influences. (1) Sometimes we believe it to be an affectation; (2) sometimes it is the effect of early forcing; (3) sometimes it is the rebound and reaction of earnestness; (4) sometimes it is the expression of suspense; (5) sometimes it is the indifference of disappointment, of unhappiness, of sin. How shall we shake off this lethargy which lies upon us all more or less in this body of death? One moment of real, vivid, intense prayer—one resolute wishing of the wish into the ear, into the spirit, of the present listening God—that will do it. Hath He *taken upon Him*, and shall He not succeed?

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Sundays in the Temple*, p. 20.

REFERENCES: xviii. 17.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 58; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 258. xviii. 21.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 187. xviii. 24-36.—R. Hughes, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 36. xviii. 25.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 99.

Chap. xix., ver. 2.—"Have ye received the Holy Ghost?"

I. WHY should not each of us put this question to his own heart as a personal inquiry, as a question that ought to be answered as before God, without equivocation, without self-deception, and without any attempt to deal triflingly with the piercing and all-important interrogative? If we treat the question in this way, it will become to us a judgment-seat; and why should we not ever and anon arrest ourselves in the hurry and rush and delirium of life, to ask a question or two that shall pierce the heart and bring us to a right knowledge and a proper estimation of ourselves? The Divine mediation is a progress. From the beginning to the end, from the outline, the shadow, the type, to this great spiritual personality, this sovereignty of the Holy Ghost, there has been progress, advancement, culmination; and in all these I see a grandeur most impressive and instructive. Now, are we in the line of that progress, are we as far on as our opportunities have enabled us to be? or are some of us still lingering far behind? Have some of us turned back to the beggarly elements? Is it not matter of debate with the heart whether it has passed through the process called regeneration—whether it has passed from death unto life?

II. What is the one decisive sign by which we may know whether we have received the Holy Ghost? Is it to be a mere sentiment, an impression upon the mind, a religious hope? or is it to be something more decisive, emphatic, and incontrovertible?

What is the one decisive sign that a man has received the Holy Ghost? Let me approach that question through two others. Have you received the poetic spirit? How do you prove it? Not by prose, but by poetry. Have you received the heroic spirit? How do you prove it? Not by cowardice, not by craven-heartedness, but by adventure and by freely encountering peril in all its thousand forms and possibilities of visitation. Have you received the Holy Spirit? The decisive sign is love of holiness, not power of theological debate; not only contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, not only outwardly irreproachable character, but love of holiness; not reputation, but reality; a heart that pants after the holiness of God; life concentrated into one burning prayer to be sanctified, body, soul, and spirit; life a sacrifice on God's altar,—that is what I mean by saying that holiness is the one decisive test of our having received the Holy Ghost. Alas! are not some professing Christians afraid to say the word "holy"? I find this in the course of my study of human nature and my intercourse with men, that I should be almost startled if I heard some men say the word "holy." They hope; they assent; they would fain believe; they are not without some idea that so-and-so may be the case; but a rich, ripe, unctuous, emphatic expression of Christian experience would be from their lips almost an anti-climax, if not a profanity. We are not called upon to do with as little Christianity as possible; it is not "Just get over the line, and that will do"; it is this: "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect; be ye holy, as God is holy." This is the vocation to which we are called, and if, when men ask us if we have received the Holy Ghost, we only answer them by some theological mystery which neither they nor we can understand, then we lie not unto men, but unto the Holy Ghost.

PARKER, *City Temple*, 1870, p. 421.

Chap. xix., ver. 2.—"And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

I. THE Holy Spirit testifies of Christ. To manifest Him, to draw men to Him, to bring them into captivity to His easy yoke and light burden—this is the Spirit's operation in the human heart. And this it could never be before Jesus was glorified. The testimonies to a Saviour to come were necessarily vague and enigmatical; not the subjects of firm personal reliance nor of blessed assurance, but only just prophetic glimpses into the far distance, enough for those days, to keep the saints

waiting on the Lord their God, but not to be compared for an instant with the work of the Spirit now. The whole office and work of the Spirit became new and of a higher order, inasmuch as the truths with which it is now concerned were before unknown.

II. The Spirit has wrought since the day of Pentecost as He never wrought before, in the testimony which He bears in the heart of every individual believer. We do not read of any such direct access to God granted to individual men in ancient times. This is another great characteristic of the dispensation of the Spirit, that all hierarchical distinction between man and man is for ever abolished, all sacrifice superseded, except the abiding efficacy of the one Sacrifice shed abroad in the heart of the spiritual man.

III. Again, the indwelling Spirit of these latter days of the Church is eminently the Spirit of wisdom. The humble child, walking by the light of this Spirit, is wiser than his teachers if they have Him not. The matured believer, rich in experience as in years of the Lord's service, is enabled to look down on the world and all that is in it, and count it but dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

IV. Lastly, the Spirit of God now abiding among us is a *transforming* Spirit; not merely enlightening, nor merely comforting, nor merely conferring the adoption of sons, but changing us into the image of God, begetting in us a thirst to be like Him whose sons we are, to have done with sin, and to cast off corruption and to put on perfect holiness. And the end of this progressive change will be the fulness of assimilation to our glorified Redeemer, in that day of which it is said, "When He shall appear we know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. i., p. 380.

CONSIDER:—

I. The influence of the Holy Ghost on the department of belief. We are often where these Ephesians were. What came to them and saved them was the Holy Ghost. What must come to us and save us is the same Holy Spirit. There they were holding certain truths about God and Jesus, holding them drearily and coldly, with no life and no spirit in their faith. God the Holy Spirit came into them, and then their old belief opened into a different belief; then they really believed. Can any day in man's life compare with that day? If it were to break forth into flames of fire and tremble with sudden and

mysterious wind, would it seem strange to him—the day when he first knew how near God was, and how true truth was, and how deep Christ was? Have we known that day?

II. The Holy Spirit not only gives clearness to truth, but gives delight and enthusiastic impulse to duty. The work of the Spirit was to make Jesus vividly real to man. What He did then for any poor Ephesian man or woman who was toiling away in obedience to the law of Christianity was to make Christ real to the toiling soul behind and in the law. I find a Christian who has really received the Holy Ghost, and what is it that strikes and delights me in him? It is the intense and intimate reality of Christ. Christ is evidently to him the dearest person in the universe. He talks to Christ. He dreads to offend Christ. He delights to please Christ. His whole life is light and elastic, with this buoyant desire of doing everything for Jesus, just as Jesus would wish it done. Duty has been transfigured. The weariness, the drudgery, the whole task—nature, has been taken away. Love has poured like a new life-blood along the dry veins, and the soul that used to toil and groan and struggle goes now singing along its way, "The life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *The Candle of the Lord*, p. 214.

How shall we know whether the Holy Spirit is dwelling in us? The tokens of His indwelling are such as cannot be mistaken.

I. One of them is the growing love of our neighbour which He works in us. I put this test first, because nothing more clearly marks off the growth of Christianity from that of other ideas than this love towards all who contribute to its working out. The world has seen many changes brought about by a spirit or an idea. Art, letters, political institutions, have had their time of growth. A general result has been attained at the cost very often of the individuals who bring it about. But of the Church of Christ those inspired words of Paul would serve as the motto, "I seek not yours, but you." The great eternal house of God, of which Jesus Himself is the headstone of the corner, is built of living stones. The Church is built up by your effort, but your soul is at the same time brought nearer to God. Every soul of man is an end in this work of sanctifying the world, even though it be also a means. Christ is not careless of a single soul. And the absence of love is a proof of the absence of the Spirit who is love.

II. There is another test—the hatred of sin. We can no more have in our hearts fleshly lusts and the presence of the Spirit than we can walk east and west at the same time. They are contrary the one to the other.

III. There is yet a third test—that of love of Christ in God. Let us ask Him to burn up all the wood and stubble wherewith we have been building in ourselves after a fashion of our own, and build up in us a sincere trust in Himself and His Son. For when we can look upon God as our hiding-place from trouble and our shelter from temptation, when we can look up to the cross on which hung the Son of God manifested in the flesh, knowing that from that death came our salvation, then we are sure that the Spirit of God has not deserted us; for there cannot be in us any faith or any love that does not proceed from Him.

ARCHBISHOP THOMSON, *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, p. 124.

THE communication of the Spirit, as imparted by the apostles to the new converts, was generally, if not always, of a miraculous character. It would appear, indeed, from the expression in the Epistle to the Romans and from some others, that the apostles themselves did not quite know, beforehand, the exact nature of the gifts which would be bestowed. But in the instances where the gift is recorded it consisted either of tongues or prophecy or both.

I. It has pleased God that these supernatural gifts should at least for a while cease in His Church. Still, we may lay down, as a general truth, that what God did by gifts, *i.e.*, by supernatural bestowment, in the beginning of the Church, He now effects by grace, *i.e.*, by ordinary communication. God has not withdrawn, God has not diminished His love, or His superintendence, or His largesses to His Church—only He has changed the channels.

II. Confirmation is not the only instrument by which God gives the assuring Spirit, because the Holy Ghost never confines Himself to any ordinances; but whether we look at the intention of the Church, or at the authority or precedent of the apostles, or at the experience of many persons and the witness of facts, I have not a shadow of doubt that confirmation is peculiarly adapted, and blessed of God, to give to the already sincere and believing soul a sealing impression of Divine truth, to assimilate the character and establish the heart.

III. Confirmation is not, properly speaking, a converting

ordinance; this must have been done before. It is the establishing of grace. The heart appropriates its baptismal privileges; the soul, receiving and received, feels its calling; the infant baptism has its supplement; early faith is crowned with sensible tokens of acceptance and favour, and the young Christian receives the Holy Ghost after he has believed.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 7th series, p. 53.

REFERENCES: xix. 2.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 311; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 258; *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 349; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1790; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 1st series, p. 170; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 198. xix. 8, 9.—R. Davey, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 329. xix. 13.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 379. xix. 15.—*Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 118; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 42. xix. 18-20.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 192. xix. 19.—J. M. McCulloch, *Sermons*, p. 211. xix. 20.—J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension to Trinity*, p. 228. xix. 21.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 419. xix. 24-9.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 253. xix. 27.—J. Baines, *Sermons*, p. 29; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 230.

Chap. xix., ver. 32.—"Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together."

THE Voices of Great Crowds.

A crowd is more than a gathering of individual minds, feelings, hopes. It is itself an individual, possessed for the time by a spirit of its own. It may be powerful for good or strong for evil. It is often the representative of one single undivided passion, and as it may be lifted above thoughts of self by enthusiasm for a great cause, so it may be the blind and violent expression of self-interest.

I. As we are constituted we must lead two lives, an individual life and an aggregate. "To his own master each man must stand or fall." This is the assertion of the necessity of our individual life. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together"; here of our social life. There is a power, hard to define, but appreciable by all who have tried it, in union of minds and feelings for a common object. On such union depends the outcome of sympathy, of enthusiasm, of those mysterious powers which have such effect on our moral and intellectual nature. Great movements must be urged by the energy, the impulse, which comes of human spirits acting in union.

II. But, as we must act and move in union, we must think and judge as individuals. We must act in crowds; but we must stand

think alone. We may not merge our individuality in any crowd, however respectable. We must try, however hard the task, to think alone and withstand the pressure of the crowd, for crowds are of all classes of society, of all professions, of all parties. The crowd at Ephesus repeats itself in many ways. There is always selfishness, prejudice, ignorance, suspicion, fear of doing right lest evil should come of it, in every crowd; because all are men of like affections, organs, passions, and temptations. We are all members of a crowd—a crowd of our own—and are therefore liable to have our perception of truth affected by selfish fears and hopes, not flowing from the pure desire to see "reason and the will of God" prevail. We must labour to separate ourselves from the crowd of those who shout with us, and try our principles by other standards. Like ships about to proceed on a long voyage, we need to withdraw for a time from the attractions of a crowded harbour, and correct our compasses before setting sail.

A. AINGER, *Sermons*, p. 142.

REFERENCES: xx. 7.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 254; xx. 9.—J. Thain Davidson, *Forewarned—Forearmed*, p. 93. xx. 19.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 365. xx. 21.—J. Natt, *Posthumous Sermons*, p. 113; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 300. xx. 22.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Christian Year*, vol. i., p. 71. xx. 22-4.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 563.

Chap. xx., ver. 24.

I. LOOK, first, at the fact that a man was able to say of all the afflictions of life, "None of these things move me." There are three thoughts that stand out conspicuously in these words. (1) Calmness. Self-possession is a great secret of life; and I know no road to real self-possession but true religion. (2) Elevation. He looks down on "these things," and says "None of them move me." They are little things; they are down beneath me. Elevation—getting nearer to the grandnesses of eternity—makes the things of this little world seem what they really are. (3) Independence. The man who wishes to be independent of external circumstances must be dependent upon God. Depend somewhere this leaning heart of man must; and if you wish not to depend upon the creature, you must depend upon the Creator.

II. "Neither count I my life dear unto myself." To the natural man the external joys and sorrows of life are all, for he

knows no other. But when, by union with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit enters into a man's breast, and he begins another life, that life of Jesus within him becomes to his perception so predominant—it becomes so all-important to him—that the other gradually sinks away and away into a distant insignificance. He stands, as it were, on the margin of a river, and he rejoices to see it flowing out; he rejoices that that which separates him from the land beyond shall cease to be, because he looks for the time when he shall take his wing and fly away and be at rest; and when he contemplates all the affections and fellowships—the rest, the services, the pure, unsullied joys of that life—that which was once to him exceeding precious becomes a thing of little worth, and he can say, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself."

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 1865, p. 1.

REFERENCES: xx. 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1734; J. S. Pearsall, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 251; *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 254; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 14; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 3; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 29. xx. 27.—W. Gresley, *Practical Sermons*, p. 1. xx. 26, 27.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 289.

Chap. xx., ver. 28.—"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."

I. THE flock is the true Church, the spiritual living family of God, and the charge given us concerning them is, "Feed that flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." Then there is food provided? Most undoubtedly—abundant food, provision to meet all your requirements, all your possible wants and desires. The provision is absolutely and exclusively in the word of God. All the blessings that faith appropriates wherever the soul is sustained and fed are to be found in the word of God. It is all apprehended by faith, and there is no legitimate object on which faith is fixed but those that are presented to us by the teaching of the Spirit of God on the pages of God's holy word. It is exactly in proportion as the precious things of the word of the living God are brought forth and dealt out in all their richness and profusion in the ministrations of God's ambassadors that souls are fed and nourished and sustained and built up in faith.

II. Consider, next, wherein the qualification of ministers consists for feeding the flock. The qualification is a knowledge of the counsel of God. That was Paul's qualification, and by

virtue of his teaching, and the communication by his instrumentality of such qualifications to the elders of the church at Ephesus, they were competent. What is wanted is plain, downright, dogmatical teaching of the word of God—the great and glorious doctrines put forth distinctly and positively, no attempting to reconcile what God does not reconcile, but the grand fundamental truths beginning with God's everlasting purpose and man's responsibility in connection therewith; a free, full, finished, present, and everlasting salvation proposed to every child of man willing to receive it; the certainty that God will keep His own and bring them to the haven where they would be; that there is food for every spiritual necessity and requirement,—these are things that are wanted in the pulpit. Then will our people be edified and built up, and become trees of God's own planting, bearing abundant fruit to His glory.

III. Look at the motive here assigned for feeding the flock. God hath bought the Church with His own blood. This shows us the value of the Church. It is one of the strongest conceivable motives why the elders of the Church and ministers should devote themselves to the work of the Lord.

C. MOLYNEUX, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 390.

REFERENCES: xx. 28.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 95 *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., pp. 100, 140, 243, 244. xx. 31.—J. H. Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 20; B. Gregory, *Ibid.*, vol. xviii., p. 81; J. Edmunds, *Fifteen Sermons*, p. 343. xx. 32.—A. Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 216; J. J. S. Perowne, *Sermons*, p. 120.

Chap. xx., ver. 35.—"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

I. THESE words are often interpreted in a very narrow spirit. They are supposed generally to be merely a reference to the giving of alms; so it is said that as an apostle Paul ministered unto his own necessities and to those that were with him—showed them all things—how he had to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." I think the Apostle himself is using this as a great general principle, and not a special application of it. I am not quite sure that it is always more blessed to give than to receive, if it is only a question of giving charitable dole. Sometimes giving blesses neither him that gives nor him that receives. But the point of the text is that the Christian man is to remember that what he does is not for himself, but for others. From him ever is to flow out a holy stream of influence, whereby

he, denying himself and sacrificing himself, becomes good and does good to those who are around. The Church will only be strong as you exhibit this spirit. You will find it more blessed to give than to receive, for it will take you out of yourselves. Every member should remember that he is not for himself, but for the Church.

II. This principle is the grand bond of social union too. If everybody in the Church would be looking out for himself, I should very soon hear of a root of bitterness springing up to trouble him. God is ever giving, giving to all, giving without much gratitude. How many of us are guided constantly in our thoughts of giving by what we are to receive in return! We are always seeding, expecting the harvest. God is always seeding, and leaving the harvest for those who wish to gather it. You remember that old legend, which is told in some ancient rabbinical story, very touching and very beautiful, concerning Abraham. He was sitting at the door of his tent one day waiting to receive strangers; and there came up to him an old man a hundred years old, bowed with age and travel, who asked for refreshment and hospitality; and Abraham arose and welcomed the stranger to his tent, and set meat and bread before him, and waited upon the aged man; but he was surprised when he observed that the aged man began to eat without first giving God thanks. Abraham said, "Sir, you have taken your food without blessing God first: why is this?" And the man answered, "I do not believe in God. I worship the host of heaven." Whereupon, saith the story, Abraham grew zealously angry, and drove the man out, and would not receive him into his tent. Then God called Abraham and said, "I have borne with that man these hundred years or more, and he never regarded Me, and canst thou not bear with him a few minutes when he gives thee no trouble?" Whereupon Abraham rose, went out and fetched the stranger in, washed his feet, gave him food once more and good counsel. Abraham's God is our God, and the spirit of the Eternal One only receives fullest, completest illustration when we learn fully this blessed principle, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

L. D. BEVAN, *Penny Pulpit* No. 905.

Chap. xx., ver. 35.

I. In the one word "blessed" the whole force of this sentence lies. What does "more blessed" mean? Is there any reference in it to *enjoyment*. Because if there is, all enjoyment being

a reception of pleasure, the blessing will thus seem to mean, that he who gives shall receive more pleasure than he who merely receives, and so we shall have set before us the unworthy motive—giving for receiving's sake. Does our Lord mean this? Undoubtedly He *does* mean this; undoubtedly He does set before us as a motive, to give, for receiving's sake. There can be no blessing, in order to receive in this world. But when a man ardently desires to receive more of the joys of the future state he necessarily desires also to grow in grace and in the knowledge and obedience of Christ, to become free from sin in every form, and from every unworthy and degrading motive and act. An ardent longing for the joys of the next world is not greediness, is not selfishness, but leads a man in fact to the mortification of these very vices by their being incompatible with the object of his earnest endeavours. And this kind of happiness is evidently that contemplated by our Saviour in the text.

II. Why is it more blessed to give than to receive? (1) First, because the act itself is more salutary. The act and habit of giving reminds us ever why we were sent into the world; disperses our regard from self on others; keeps up a tender spirit, a wakeful conscience, an onward look of hope for more opportunity of good, an earnest endeavour to better society, to promote happiness, to become a blessing to the world in the largest sense. (2) To give is more blessed than to receive, because it is more Christian—more the calling of the follower and imitator of Christ. (3) To give is more blessed, as being more in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of *Love*. (4) Again, it is more blessed as being more like the Father Himself, who giveth us all things freely to enjoy; who gave us His own Son, and through Him His unspeakable gift of the Holy Spirit. It is likeness to Him, partaking of the Divine nature by being lifted into the likeness of all His glorious attributes, that is the utmost perfection of created being.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 1.

REFERENCES: xx. 35.—C. Girdlestone, *Twenty Parochial Sermons*, p. 103; L. Campbell, *Some Aspects of the Christian Ideal*, p. 40; J. Keble, *Sermons on Various Occasions*, p. 298. xx. 36-8.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 25. xx. 38.—J. Ker, *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 118. xxi. 3.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 204. xxi. 6.—J. Edmunds, *Fifteen Sermons*, p. 46. xxi. 12-14.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 54. xxi. 13.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 265; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 355.

Chap. xxi., ver. 14.—"And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done."

I. THE revealed will of God lies upon two pages—the page of Scripture and the page of Providence. There were three trials pressing upon the men of Cæsarea when they meekly folded their hands and said, "The will of the Lord be done." (1) There was defeat, for they were beaten in an argument into which they had evidently thrown all their power; consequently there was (2) disappointment, everything went contrary to their hopes and expectations; and (3) there was grief, the bitter grief of a painful bereavement. What is the secret of rest in all these things? I see nothing but a profound and adoring sense of God—to look away till we see only Him, His counsel ordaining, His love presiding, His hand guiding, His Spirit sanctifying, His glory crowning. "The will of the Lord be done."

II. But I turn to the unrevealed will. After all this was the main thought of the company at Cæsarea. "We cannot tell which is right, Paul or we. The Lord will show in His own time. What He decides must be best. The will of the Lord be done." It is a hard thing to sit and watch one I love, and to school my heart to receive, I do not know what, and I am afraid to ask what. But all the while, far above all this, over the perplexity, and over the mystery, and over the dread, there is reigning the high will of God, and that will is bearing on to its own destined purpose, and it must prevail. And here is faith's large field—the unrevealed will of God. Unite yourself with it, throw yourself upon it absolutely. Let it bear you where it will; it can only bear you home. "The will of the Lord be done."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 1.

REFERENCE: xxi. 15.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 250.

Chap. xxi., ver. 16.—"An old disciple."

I. THIS discipleship of Mnason commenced with the freshness of his youth. The epithet "old" does not, I think, refer so much to the man as the disciple. I do not think it tells us about the number of his years, so much as about the number of the years which he had lived as a servant of the Saviour. His birthplace was Cyprus, one of the wickedest places in all the world. To have been a disciple there was no child's play. In that place, of all others, he had witnessed a good profession before many witnesses, presenting himself body, soul, and spirit, a living sacrifice to God.

II. This discipleship of his survived all the temptations of his manhood.

III. This discipleship was held in reputation in his old age.

W. BROCK, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 582, new series.

REFERENCES: xxi. 16.—*Homiletic Magazine*. vol. x., p. 276. xxi. 17-26.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 19. xxi. 23.—*Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 181. xxi. 28.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ix., No. 377. xxi. 39.—W. Braden, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 369.

Chap. xxii., ver. 10.—"What shall I do, Lord?"

CHOICE of Professions—the Capabilities of the Christian Ministry.

I. Who can overstate the capabilities of the Christian ministry? I know that preaching may be a very poor thing; a form to the speaker, and therefore a weariness to the hearer. With many sermons are a very byword of dulness. But depend upon it, preaching, however it may fail of its effect, has every possible chance still given to it. The machinery is ready for use; it needs but the hand to move, but the spirit to animate it. There is stillness, there is patience, there is expectation, in many there is desire too, a hungering and thirsting after edification, to which it ought to be a delight to minister, which it is a sin of sins wilfully to disappoint. Let more men of thought and culture, more men of mark and power, above all, more men of purpose and devotion, give themselves to the work, and one who knows something of our town and something of our country congregations may be listened to when he promises that such preaching shall never lack attention, that such preaching shall never lose its labour.

II. Well may the Apostle's question sound in our ears, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Is it indeed so, that any man of vigorous mind or of ample knowledge may at once transfer himself to the ministry? Is nothing wanted but vigour? nothing but a humane care for others? nothing but a disinterested aim and a willingness to forgo ease and honour? Must there not be something yet beyond these things, if a man would make full proof of his ministry? Yes; there is one thing on which if we dwell not it must be because its necessity is obvious: a true faith in God through Christ, a real devotion to Him, and a life cleansed, consecrated by His undwelling Spirit.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *University Sermons*, p. 17.

REFERENCES: xxii. 16.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 57. xxii. 21-3.—H. W Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 184.

xxii. 22.—E. White, *Ibid.*, vol. xviii., p. 280. xxiii. 11.—J. H. Hitchens, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 203; W. P. Lockhart, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 264; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 43. xxiii. 30.—*Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 99. xxiv. 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1632; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 324. xxiv. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 66. xxiv. 16.—A. W. Hare, *The Alton Sermons*, p. 249; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 71; L. Campbell, *Some Aspects of the Christian Ideal*, p. 29. xxiv. 24.—*Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 119. xxiv. 24, 25.—M. Nicholson, *Communion with Heaven*, p. 36.

Chap. xxiv., vers. 24-7.

THE Character of Felix.

Felix was not a man altogether ignorant of the religion which Paul preached; he is, on the other hand, spoken of as one who had a more perfect knowledge of that way—that is, of the religion of Christ. Felix' heart was not wholly hardened; his conscience not wholly seared; he was a man who had sinned grievously, who sinned against light and knowledge, and therefore was, so to speak, on the high road to utter hardness and blindness of heart; but he had not arrived at that condition yet—if he had he would not have trembled when Paul spoke of judgment to come. And we must also remark, that although Felix was not ignorant of the claims of the gospel, and was not utterly beyond hope as being spiritually dead, still he was able to make the warnings of St. Paul utterly useless. Felix trembled, but he did nothing more; his mind was disturbed as by the sudden gust of a storm, but there was no abiding impression, no deep, lasting effect; and so the storm passed over, and he rested in his sins unchanged. We gather these lessons from his story:—

I. Is it not a besetting sin of us all to be afraid or to be too idle to look into our consciences to examine our acts, our thoughts, our words, and see whether in each day they have been such as God will approve? Is it not, in fact, the very tendency of fallen man ever to follow the example of his first parents and hide himself from the searching eye of God?

II. Again, are there not many who listen weekly to sermons, and in them hear Christ's ministers, as Felix heard St. Paul, "concerning the faith of Christ," who yet are none the better for what they hear?

III. Again, is there nothing Felix-like in the manner in which people very often treat this warning of God, which more clearly

than any human words speaks of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come?

IV. May we not see in Felix generally a type of want of seriousness in religion? His was a character wanting in deep solemn feeling, wanting in judgment as to the value of things, unable to see for more than a transient moment the awfulness of these thoughts, which made him tremble when they were uttered by St. Paul. Felix must for ever be a type a many within the Christian Church.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 182.

REFERENCE: xxiv. 24-7.—J. Fraser, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 385.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 25.

I. FELIX made two great mistakes. He did not know what constituted a convenient season, and he presumed he might repent and turn to God whenever he pleased. We are all apt to give too much weight—whether in help or hindrance—to external circumstances. It is a testimony to true religion, that almost every one will say that he hopes and means some day or other to be, if not very religious, yet certainly more religious than he is now. But then, all fancy that by-and-bye they will be in a position which will be more favourable to make a beginning. They will be holier, or their anxieties will be fewer, or their temptations will be less, or their religious advantages will be greater, or their associations in life will be more fitting, so their state of mind will be better prepared. They picture a certain future which wears a sober and almost a religious aspect, and then they call that a convenient season.

II. It is the felt willingness of God to receive us, it is the still small voice consciously heard within, it is the drawings of the secret constraining power which is the operation of the Spirit of God upon the conscience and the affections,—these make the convenient season. Where these are everything is sure to be convenient—God will make it convenient, how unlikely soever it be. Where these are not, there will be an inconvenience—an utter impossibility. All religious procrastination is an insult to the Holy Ghost. The only time to keep a resolution is the moment that it visits you; and he who does not turn to God when he is drawn, increases each time, tremendously, the risk that he will never turn at all.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 166.

Now—not By-and-bye.

I. Men lull awakened consciences to sleep, and excuse delay

in deciding for Christ by half-honest promises to attend to religion at some future time.

II. Note reasons for this attitude. (1) There is the instinctive natural wish to get rid of a disagreeable subject; (2) many think it will be time enough to think about serious things and be religious when they get older; (3) many let the impressions made on their hearts and consciences be crowded out by cares and enjoyments and pleasures and duties of this world; (4) some do not like to give up something which is inconsistent with God's love and service.

III. Delay is really decision the wrong way. It robs us of large blessings. It is gambling with a very uncertain thing—our life and its future opportunities.

A. MACLAREN, *A Year's Ministry*, 1st series, p. 165.

REFERENCES: xxiv. 25.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 171; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 80; Talmage, *Old Wells dug Out*, p. 94. xxiv. 27.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 249. xxv. 8.—*Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 57. xxv. 9.—*Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 249.

Chap. xxv., ver. 19.—"One Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive."

I. IT was essentially the worldliness of Festus which made him regard the resurrection of Christ as an idle superstition. Let us begin by inquiring in what that worldliness consisted. Worldliness—*i.e.*, the preference of the pleasurable to the right, the visible to the invisible, the transient to the everlasting. To feel Christ's resurrection as a power in life demands spiritual sympathy with Christ. Can the selfish see the beauty of unselfishness, or the sensual the beauty of purity? It needs the sense of sin, and of the necessity of a Divine and perfect sacrifice. Does the man of the world feel these? Are not thousands of men, like Festus, simply indifferent to the whole matter? To them the life, death, and resurrection of Christ is a mere story. It may be beautiful and awaken pity; it may at times become solemn and kindle fear; but it lies in their soul's chamber carelessly admitted as true, side by side with the most ancient and exploded errors.

II. Let us consider its aspect for the earnest believer. Turn from Festus to Paul. As we have seen, all his mighty energy of devotion sprang from his belief that Christ lived. There is abundant proof that this was the great theme of his preaching. He proclaimed not the dead, but the living Saviour. (1) The

resurrection of Christ was a sign of the Divinity of His teaching. (2) It was a witness to the perfectness of His atonement. (3) It was a pledge of the immortality of man. Christ died our death. He passed into the death kingdom our brother. He came again, communed with men, and then rose, bearing our nature to the Father. There was the witness to the immortal in man. Hence Paul's all-consuming zeal. The radiance of eternal life streamed on his vision through the open tomb of one Jesus, who was dead, but who, he affirmed, was alive for evermore.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 221.

SUPERSTITION.

Here Christianity is summarily disposed of by Festus as a superstition. This is a word we are quite familiar with, and we know, in a vague sort of way, what we mean when we speak of a practice or a belief as superstitious, and it somewhat startles us to see Christianity itself dismissed by the scornful Roman as a superstition.

I. The essence of superstition is the having low views of God when it is possible to have higher; in the presence of the higher to maintain the lower. It was, for example, superstition among the Jews in the form of idolatry that was forbidden in the Second Commandment. By that commandment the Jews were forbidden to make any graven image to represent God; and the reason was that the representation of God under human or animal forms was found to debase and degrade their conceptions of God. The Second Commandment is to us a spiritual command. We must study its spirit, not its letter; and its spirit is, Thou shalt not entertain low views of God. We break it when we attribute to God the limitations and imperfections of human nature, whether those limitations or imperfections be spiritual or bodily. It was superstition in the Pharisees when they thought that God connived at their evasion of actual duties because they kept the letter of some human ordinances, when they substituted ritual for deeds of purity and kindness, when they were unjust and cruel under the name of religion. This was superstition, because it meant that their views of God were still so low that they thought it pleased Him that they should worship Him in this way. They thought that God was even such a one as themselves.

II. The evil of a low conception of God is, perhaps, the most subtle and irreparable that can befall the human spirit. Our conception of God moulds our ideal of life. Such as we think God to be, such we tend to become. "They that make them are

like unto them," was said of idols and idol makers, and it is true of all conceptions of God. It is a law of human nature. It was precisely because men thought that God took pleasure in torturing men for false beliefs after they were dead that they themselves took pleasure in torturing them while they were alive. That Calvin should have condemned Servetus to the stake, that Cranmer should have signed the death warrant of Frith, are but memorable examples of the evil of holding unworthy views of God. From the fact that higher and lower views of God subsist side by side in a society or country, it becomes a question of interest what is the right attitude in presence of what seems superstition in others. The golden rule, the one absolute, supreme rule, is of course charity—a tender, sympathetic, brotherly love—neither indifference, nor contempt; the desire to raise him, and yet the resolve that while the world yet standeth we will not make our brother to offend. With such charity and sympathy as our guide, we cannot go far wrong.

J. M. WILSON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 263.

REFERENCES: E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 221; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 248.

Chap. xxvi., ver. 8.—"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

THE Resurrection a Fact of History.

I The fact that Christ has risen from the dead is the assumption on which St. Paul builds up all his teaching on the subject of the resurrection. It is true that we should consider more carefully than we are in the habit of doing what is involved in this. There are signs that modern religious thought stands in need of the invigorating influence of the facts on which Christian theology is constructed. St. Paul preached two facts —one, the resurrection of Christ in the body, as the firstfruits of the general resurrection of mankind; the other, the spiritual resurrection, as directly connected with the former, as flowing immediately from it. How easy would the Apostle's task comparatively have been, if he had thought it right to conceal the first fact and publish only the second! He would have pleased rather than alienated the intellectual Greek by expounding the miracle of a spiritual resurrection, if he had only consented not to press the physical resurrection of Christ—God's power over our bodies as well as souls. The Sadducee would not have interrupted his discourse, but listened on, and smiled to listen

to a dream so beautiful. But St. Paul had nothing to consider but truth, and he spoke it to the end.

II. If Christ has not risen, then is your faith vain and our preaching vain. Beware of dreaming that somehow, some day, there will be a change in you from evil to good—from restlessness to rest—from sorrow to joy—while at the same time you hold it as an open question whether Christ rose again. Let us not dream that we can rise out of our dark selves, save by what St. Paul calls in no figure, but as the most literal of facts, "the power of His resurrection."

A. AINGER, *Sermons*, p. 195.

I. HOWEVER far back the successive orders in creation may date, however dim and incalculably distant, or however comparatively recent the period of their first issue from the creative influence and however gradual the mode of it—nay, however in the course of countless myriads of centuries they may have developed, according to some conjectures from some single, original, and very inferior type—still the first production of that original and inferior type was a miracle, for nothing can come out of nothing except by an act, not of combination but of new creation; and the first appearance of that something, however imperfectly organised, was a miracle. It would seem to be an inference from this that for the performance by the Almighty of some transaction hitherto unprecedented, the only condition wanted is a competent necessity, an adequate occasion, a sufficient inducement.

II. With the competency of the occasion comes the special exercise of omnipotence. If the beneficent design of affording a life's happiness to the creature and its progeny was sufficient to evoke the exertion of omnipotence in the creation and animation of a worm, was the authentication of the sublimest hopes of mankind, the confirmation of their belief in Jesus, the revival of their confidence in immortality,—was this too small an object to demand, to deserve, to justify, to render probable the employment of almighty power in the reanimation of the Son of God? If the enjoyment of one day's life to a little insect were enough to evoke a miracle in the creation of the ephemeris, was the assurance of immortality to all mankind, the verification of the gospel, and the planting of the foundation-stone of Christianity, —was this too little to be worthy of even such a miracle, so vast, stupendous, and august as the resurrection of the Redeemer?

W. H. BROOKFIELD, *Sermons*, p. 168.

I. WHY should it be thought a thing incredible to us that God should raise the dead? If I am God's child, partaker of Divine nature, I have the right to say that the natural, the credible, the probable hypothesis is, that my Father would give me an immortal existence; and if I can say that, then I have the right to remind you that if revivification of the spirit of man be probable, all this mass of historical testimony that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter morning regains its old value, and that it becomes natural, credible, possible, that Jesus Christ rose from the dead

II. What are the consequences of so momentous a belief as that? Why, first, that we believe Christ's testimony about God, that we have an eternal Father, that He so loved us as to send His only begotten Son to save us from our sins, that He would not that the vilest and weakest should perish, but that all should come to repentance. What is more credible than that message, in sight of the fact that on Easter morning Christ overcame death? Do not let any man mistake. If we let go our hold of this truth, there will necessarily follow a lowering of hope and effort in every direction. If man thinks himself to be no better than a beast, he will live the life of a beast, he will seek the joys of a beast, seeking his happiness merely in sensual gratification. If we are not immortal, how can we sustain heroic effort or prolong sacrifice? And if when we leave our beloved at the edge of the grave we have to pronounce over their insensible remains, "*Vale, vale in æternum vale*," then I say it is madness to encourage those deep affections of the heart, which then would become a despair and a torment. How shall we escape these terrible consequences? Simply, I believe, by clinging to Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, who has on this blessed Easter day conquered death and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

BISHOP MOORHOUSE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 273.

REFERENCES: xxvi. 8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1067; E. G. Robinson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 250; W. M. Taylor, *The Gospel Miracles*, p. 61; xxvi. 9.—*Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 120. xxvi. 9-11.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 47. xxvi. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 202; *Ibid.*, *My Sermon Notes: Gospels and Acts*, p. 195 xxvi. 16-20.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., No. 1774.

Chap. xxvi., ver. 18.—"Faith that is in Me."

I. THE object of faith is Christ. "Faith that is in Me," which is directed towards Christ as its object. Christianity is not merely a system of truths about God, nor a code of morality

deducible from these. In its character of a revelation it is the revelation of God in the person of His Son. Christianity in the soul is not the belief of these truths about God, still less the acceptance and practice of these pure ethics, but the affiance and the confidence of the whole spirit fixed upon the redeeming, revealing Christ. The whole attitude of a man's mind is different, according as he is trusting a person or according as he is believing something about a person. And this, therefore, is the first broad truth that lies here. Faith has reference not merely to a doctrine, not to a system, but deeper than all these, to a living Lord,—"faith that is in Me."

II Consider the nature and the essence of the act of faith itself. Whom we are to trust in we have seen; what it is to have faith may be very briefly stated. If the object of faith be more than truths, more than unseen realities, more than promises, if the object be a living person,—then there follows inseparably this, that faith is not merely the assent of the understanding, that faith is not merely the persuasion of the reality of unseen things, that faith is not merely the confident expectation of future good; but that faith is the personal relation of him that believes with the living Person its object—the relation which is expressed not more clearly, but perhaps a little more forcibly, to us by substituting another word, and saying, Faith is trust.

III. The power of faith. If a man believes, he is saved. Why so? Not as some people sometimes seem to fancy—as if in faith itself there were any merit. A living trust in Jesus has power unto salvation only because it is the means by which the power of God unto salvation may come into my heart.

IV. Note, finally, the guilt and criminality of unbelief. It is the will, the heart, the whole moral being, that is concerned. Why does a man not trust Jesus Christ? For one reason only, because he will not. Unbelief is criminal because it is a moral act, an act of the whole nature. Belief or unbelief is the test of a man's whole spiritual condition, just because it is the whole being, affections, will, conscience, and all, as well as the understanding, which are concerned in it; and therefore Christ, who says "Sanctified by faith that is in Me," says likewise, "He that believeth not shall be condemned."

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons in Manchester*, 1st series, p. 167.

Chap. xxvi., ver. 18.—"To turn them from darkness to light."

FOR us, as well as for St. Paul, were these words spoken. For us, in these far days, did that vision of exceeding

brilliancy appear, which put to shame the light even of the mid-day Eastern sun; and for our sakes, as well as for his, were these words spoken, by which the whole current of his life was changed, and an entirely new future opened out before him. Remember:—

I. How light is used elsewhere in the Bible as a symbol and a type of God. From the time when the creative voice of God is heard sounding through the darkness of chaos, from the time when first the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, calling light into existence, down almost to the concluding words of the last page of the Book of Revelation the symbolical meanings and uses of light are scattered broadcast over the sacred page. The words of our text contain, in brief, the history of every man who attains finally to salvation. Born in darkness, it is necessary that a light from heaven should shine into a man's soul before he can be made fit to enter in through the gates into the city, or be worthy to stand in the presence of Almighty God.

II. Though from one point of view man is but a shadow which easily departeth, yet what a foreshadowing of futurity there is in the higher parts of man! What mysterious powers man finds in himself! What lessons are taught us by the marvellous capacities which a man is conscious of as existing within himself from time to time!—powers and capacities which he cannot fully understand, and which are not even at all times fully under his control, and yet are possessed of a power and a strength which at times positively startle him. Look at that impalpable thing we call a soul. Without entering on any definition of that mysterious power of existence, we can yet learn many lessons from it. We learn that there is within us, so to speak, an existence which shall live consciously through all the ages of eternity and in this life is now only very partially within our power; but within us there is a spiritual life which can be exalted or debased, conformed more to the image of God or to the image of Satan, according to our behaviour in this world, and the measure of grace given to us, and our use or abuse of that grace. There is an illumination of the heart for which all should crave. There is One, gentle in speech, tender in manner, loving in heart, who has declared Himself the enlightener of all that come to Him. It matters not to what stage of the spiritual life we have yet attained: we all need that light to guide us "ever more and more unto that perfect day." Fear not if that light seem to be long in coming.

Let us be ever striving manfully towards that light, and then, though at times storms may beat upon us, yet for us, too, at length there will come the rift in the cloud, and for us at eventime it shall be light.

E. WILBERFORCE, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 697.

REFERENCES: xxvi. 18.—*Good Words*, vol. iii., pp. 315, 317; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 343.

Chap. xxvi., ver. 19.

THE Heavenly Vision.

I. Note, first, that the heavenly vision shines for us too.

II. The vision of Christ, howsoever perceived, comes demanding obedience.

III. This obedience is in our own power to give or to withhold.

IV. This obedience may, in a moment, revolutionise a life.

A. MACLAREN, *The Unchanging Christ*, p. 236.

REFERENCE: xxvi. 19.—A. Macleod, *Christian World Pulpit* vol. xiii., p. 360.

Chap. xxvi., vers. 19, 20.

CONVERSION of St. Paul.

I. The conversion of St. Paul meant that he became convinced of the mission of Jesus Christ. It convinced him of that only, as he says himself, because it pleased God to reveal His Son in him, because he was brought to know that the Son of God was the Lord of his spirit and the Lord of man, and that this Son of God must be that Jesus whom he had rejected as a crucified man.

II. St. Paul's conversion was, as to its law and principle, a typical one, and the circumstances in it which are never likely to recur were designed to fix that which is universal in it more deeply in our minds. Do I mean that we all have need of a conversion such as his was? I can only answer, Wherever there is aversion, there must, I conceive, be conversion. Wherever the eye shrinks from the light, there must be some power to make it turn to the light. If we are not conscious of anything which makes us unwilling to have our deeds made manifest, I cannot admit that unconsciousness as a decisive proof that there *is* nothing. I rather think that those who are most desirous of truth feel most their inclination to be false, crave most for help against their falsehood. St. Paul's conversion was the joyful recognition of an Almighty Friend whom he had suspected as an enemy, and his conversion created no

chasm between his earlier years and his later. It brought into unity years that had seemed to be hopelessly asunder; for now he knew that God had been with him at Tarsus, in his rabbinical studies, in his mental anguish. Periods that he would once have given the world to blot out for ever were overshadowed by a Divine love and forgiveness which made the memory of them precious to him.

III. There was a crisis in St. Paul's life. There may be a crisis in the life of every one of us. But the crisis of a fever does not determine the issue of death or of recovery. And *this* crisis is only the moment when we yield passively to the death which has been always stealing upon us and threatening to devour us, or put our trust in One who has undergone death that He might deliver us out of the jaws of it. Let the history of St. Paul's conversion teach us that we are to interpret repentance, "Turning to God." It is to have no other sense in our vocabulary.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 157.

REFERENCES: xxvi. 24, 25.—T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 76. xxvi. 25.—*Expository Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 134; *Good Words*, vol. iii., pp. 186, 187; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 106; vol. iii., p. 30; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 265.

Chap. xxvi., ver. 26.—"This thing was not done in a corner."

THE Publicity of Christianity.

I. This statement, made in reference to a particular case, holds good in regard to the whole doctrine and claim of Christianity. The juggler has his secrets; the crafty man has his darkened rooms; the imposter has his hidden wires and invisible screws; whereas the truly honest teacher conceals himself behind no curtains, mutters no incoherent incantations, but walks openly in the sunny day, and shows his heart alike to the keenest reader and to the simplest child. This is precisely the case with Christianity. We are invited by Christianity to look upon disclosures as open as the sky, and to rest upon assurances which are strong and simple as the rocks. Of Christianity we may say truly, "This thing was not done in a corner." It was not done when men were asleep; it was not huddled up, lest any man should detect a flaw in the process; it was done openly; there was brightness on every side,—there was a challenge to every enemy. All this I claim as pointing an argument in support of Christianity.

II. Can any other religion show anything like this in wealth and splendour of publicity? All this publicity is but the practical side of a great argument, and applies to us in this day. Christ does not want any sneaking followers; He calls for courage, simplicity, boldness, emphasis, earnestness of tone. Christianity has a practical as well as a controversial side. Take out of your history, out of your families, out of your own individual lives, all that Christianity has done directly and indirectly, and you exhaust civilisation, you exhaust yourselves. To *act*, that is preaching. There is an eloquence of behaviour; there is a logic of conduct; there is a high controversy; and men of simple, pure, lustrous character win the victory.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 217.

Chap. xxvi., ver. 28.—"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

NOTE:—

I. Some of those hopeful and encouraging indications of character which may be found in a person who, after all, is nothing more than an almost Christian. Thus, (1) There may be a great deal of religious knowledge in such a person. This was evidently the case with Agrippa. He was a man in advance of his age. It was in no spirit of fulsome compliment, we are sure, that Paul gave as a reason for the satisfaction he felt in pleading before such a judge—"Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews"; and then appealing to his acquaintance with Jewish theology to certify whether, in believing the possibility of a resurrection, he was doing more than filling up the outline of those hopes and anticipations which their twelve tribes had cherished, from the days of Abraham until that day. And so, also, it may be with us. We may be before many around us in religious intelligence, may be mighty in the Scriptures, deeply read in creeds, exact, sound in all our views of the plan of salvation; and yet, by reason of all this knowledge being unapplied—the will not being influenced by it, the affections not purified by it—may be no better Christians than Agrippa was. (2) Other qualities of head and heart will easily occur to you as both consistent with, and often specially marking, the religion of an almost Christian—such as amicableness of disposition, gentleness of temper, tastes, studies, feelings, tenderness, which, if nothing were told us to the contrary, we should be ready to conclude were hopeful indications of the

Christian character. The counterfeit deceives many, and often deceives ourselves.

II. Why is it that people persuaded to go so far in the Christian life cannot be persuaded to go further? The religion of the almost Christian would go further if there were anything of sincerity in such religion as he has already. But there is not. True religion is never worth anything till you come to take some pleasure in it for itself. But this absence of love for God is not the only reason why people are satisfied to remain almost, and not altogether, Christians. There is the predominant love in the heart of something else. Little as he would like to be told it, the almost Christian might with equal truth be designated the almost idolater. The great truth that stands out everywhere in God's Word is that in the future world there are two states, and two states only. We read nothing about a middle condition—nothing about a paradise of mediocrity—nothing about a heaven for the almost saved. And so if we must fix a value on such a persuasion as Agrippa had, and such a persuasion as, it must be feared, many have with him, it must be this—that it had been better for him never to have been persuaded at all.

D. MOORE, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3162.

I. WHAT were the gains of Agrippa? For a few years more he kept the glories to which he clung; he played his part of king on the world's stage, and men bowed to him the crooked hinges of the knee and paid him lip homage, and he sat in the chief place of honour at wearisome feasts, and was the principal figure in hollow court ceremonials and empty pageants of state; and then the play was over and his little day was done, and darkness of night swallowed up all, and he carried nothing away with him when he died (except indeed his sins); neither did his pomp follow him. His gains were not after all so very large, and, such as they were, they did not tarry with him long.

II. But his losses, or rather his loss? He lost himself. He had not gained the whole world—only a miserable little fragment of it, and this but for a moment, for a little inch of time; but in the grasping and gaining of this he had made that terrible loss—shipwreck—of which Christ speaks—had lost himself; in other words, had lost all. Whatever our bonds may be, it is worth the while to break them, as in the strength of Christ they can be broken. These mountains of opposition, it is worth while to cry to Him that He would

make them plain. It is well worth the while. A few years hence, and it will be with every one of us as it was with King Agrippa not very long after these memorable words were uttered, and then how utterly insignificant, not merely to others but to ourselves, will it be whether we were here in high places or in low, rich or poor, talked about or obscure, whether we trod lonely paths or were grouped in joyful households of love, whether our faces were oftener soiled with tears or drest with smiles. But for us, gathered as we then shall be within the veil, and waiting for the judgment of the great day, one thing shall have attained an awful significance, shall stand out alone, as the final question, the only surviving question of our lives: Were we almost Christ's or altogether? in other words, Were we Christ's or were we not?

R. C. TRENCH, *Sermons, New and Old*, p. 11.

I. AGRIPPA was a king, and must have thought of the state, station, power that he would in all likelihood have to lay down if he took up the religious profession of an obscure, despised, and persecuted sect. He loved the praise of man, and thought of the taunts, the jeers, the neglect he would have to encounter from those with whose views and habits his own had heretofore been congenial. He was a proud man, and he would have to confess that for all his life he had been in the wrong, while the fishermen of Galilee were in the right. He was the friend of Cæsar, and thirty years before it had been most truly, though most insidiously, said, "If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend!" His kingdom was of this world, and the kingdom of Christ was not. Such thoughts we may imagine passing through his mind with the rapidity of instinct. He counted the cost after his fashion, but it was too great. He never adopted either the profession or the moral practice of a Christian.

II. The case of many of us resembles that of Agrippa. We remain yet to be persuaded altogether, and distinctly to adopt the active practical life which belongs to the designation we profess, and are only almost persuaded to obey the Lord of Truth at all hazards, and to adorn the gospel of charity in all things and through all difficulties. Every rational conviction of the conscience is a visitant from God—an angel sent to trouble the pool; and if it be neglected, then both the conviction and the opportunity that has awakened it must be recorded against you. Be sure of this—every neglect of such opportunities in

trifling with God; and every such trifling will operate to the abatement of His long suffering, till at length the fatal sentence will be pronounced: "He is joined to idols—let him alone."

W. H. BROOKFIELD, *Sermons*, p. 175.

REFERENCES: xxvi. 28.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xv., No. 871; R. L. Browne, *Sussex Sermons*, p. 127; J. Natt, *Posthumous Sermons*, p. 371; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., pp. 105, 258; vol. v., p. 105. xxvi. 29.—*Sermons for Boys and Girls*, p. 200; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., pp. 114, 184.

Chap. xxvi.

ST. PAUL'S Defence before Agrippa.

Observe:—

I. What is the central truth of the Christian system. It is a very suggestive fact that Festus had got hold of the kernel of the whole subject, as we see in his conversation with Agrippa, when he said, "Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: but had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." Now, this can be accounted for only on the supposition that Paul had given special prominence to the resurrection of Christ. It was, and is in fact, the very keystone of the arch, and everything else depends on it.

II. What is the normal type of the Christian man. It is a man of faith. Paul's faith had a peculiar influence. He was not one of those who seek to divorce religion from life. Nay, rather, his religion was his life, and his life was his religion. The two things interpenetrated each other. Religion was the very atmosphere in which he lived and moved and had his being; and his faith regulated even the minutest details of his conduct. To be a Christian is to have faith in the living personal Saviour, Jesus Christ, and to have that faith itself a living thing pervading the conduct.

III. Observe the gate of entrance into the Christian life. This is illustrated both in Paul and in Agrippa. St. Paul was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. But now look at Agrippa. In Paul's appeal a heavenly vision had been given to him also. He is urged to accept Jesus and His salvation; but he is disobedient, and resists the appeal, either with disdain or with a twinge of conscience which makes him feel that he is doing violence to his better nature. No man becomes a Christian against his will; it is by willing to be so that he becomes a Christian, and it is over this willing that the whole battle of

conversion has to be fought. The *if he will* is the Thermopylæ of the whole conflict, the narrow and intense hinge on which the whole matter turns—the gate into the Christian life.

IV. Observe, finally, that short of this gate of entrance, no matter whether we be near or far from it, there is no salvation. "Almost saved," if it be no more, is in the end altogether lost, and that in the most melancholy circumstances.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Paul the Missionary*, p. 425.

REFERENCES: xxvi.—W. M. Taylor, *The Gospel Miracles*, p. 61; J. Natt, *Posthumous Sermons*, p. 371; *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 120; R. L. Browne, *Sussex Sermons*, p. 127; *Sermons for Boys and Girls*, p. 200; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 202; vol. xxx., No. 1774; vol. xv., No. 871; C. J. Vaughan, *The Church of the First Days*, vol. iii., p. 321; Parker, *City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 217; A. Maclaren, *Sermons Preached in Manchester*, 1863, p. 180; A. Brookfield, *Sermons*, p. 168; R. W. Dale, *Discourses on Special Occasions*, p. 179. xxvii. 1-3.—T. Gasquoine, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 401. xxvii. 1-6.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 60. xxvii. 6.—A. M. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 184. xxvii. 13, 14.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 485. xxvii. 15-26.—T. Gasquoine, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 27. xxvii. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1070; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, p. 71. xxvii. 21.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 28. xxvii. 22.—J. O. Davies, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 560.

Chap. xxvii., vers. 24-34.—"Lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

I. GOD judged that St. Paul was concerned with the lives of the crew of the ship he sailed in, and gave these men their lives as a precious gift. Here we have what may be called the head and the feet of the same truth: the head—God's estimate of the value of life; the feet—man's estimate of the contempt deserved by any one who, being strong, uses his strength to benefit himself at the expense of his neighbour. The value of life on the one hand, and on the other the meanness of selfish gain, that even life itself must be quietly thrown away when compared with the meanness of saving it by selfishness.

II. And round this great truth as a fence and encircling wall, determining where it is to be practised, runs the strong enclosure of the same place and the same common object, unity and communion, through living together, typified in the ship. And

how true this is! Whether we like it or not, we share largely in the fortunes and reputation of the place we live in, even as we contribute largely to it by good and evil, however loose the tie of place may be. But when it takes the ship form, that close association, which comes from all on board at the time depending on one another, and on the well-doing of the place in which they are, then, indeed, from the highest to the lowest, however discordant the mixture of persons may be, the welfare of the place is their welfare, its reputation is their reputation, and it becomes more than ever true that the lives of all belong to each other, and it is unutterable meanness for the strong to take advantage of the weak, or for the weak to endeavour to overreach the strong or not give true service in their way. In many societies, the actual safety of all as much depends on each doing his duty as in a ship. The golden rule of life is, that weakness is at once a claim on every one who is stronger. The prisoner Paul, the weakest man there, saved the whole crew.

E. THRING, *Uppingham Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 140.

REFERENCES: xxvii. 25.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1335. xxvii. 27-9.—A. G. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 339. xxvii. 27-37.—T. Gasquoine, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 35. xxvii. 29.—J. Thain Davidson, *Sure to Succeed*, p. 177; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 364. xxvii. 30, 31.—J. M. Neale, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 44; *Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 263. xxvii. 38-44.—T. Gasquoine, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 52.

Chap. xxvii., ver. 44.

SAFE to Land.

I. In reading the narrative of this voyage and shipwreck (1) the first impression on the mind is produced by the prisoner, the Apostle Paul. He is singularly unlike a prisoner. He is the true captain, the foremost man, evidently, on board the ship. (2) The narrative is a statement of the unconditioned freeness and the glorious fulness of Divine goodness. (3) See what an important thing in the scheme of means human responsibility is. "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." Even the boards and the broken pieces of the ship are all parts of the Divine purposes. (4) Here we have exemplified and illustrated the mystery of the salvation of sinners for the sake of the saints. This text most solemnly illustrates to us that God has somehow set together human earnestness and human conversion.

II. "Some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship." All means are good means which save—none are insignificant which give security. In the storm of darkness and

unbelief, in the tempestuous night, it seems as if all is shipwrecked in thee, broken in pieces; and yet, see what scattered glimpses, what broken, imperfect appearances, what scattered discoveries of Jesus Christ float up and down and do at any time appear in thy spirit! Thou wilt see some if thou wilt look and watch for them. Cast thyself upon them: these are the broken planks, the most imperfect, darkest, narrowest glimpses of Christ. Many a sacred text has been the board, the broken piece of ship, on which souls have escaped safe to land.

III. God is a good Captain. If the ship is lost, He saves the crew. There is land, and all who sail in the ship are safe. Gather up all the promises which, like so many planks, have floated over and sustained on death's waves, and you will build a ship to hold the Church.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Dark Sayings on a Harp*, p. 313.

REFERENCES: xxvii. 44.—H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *Waterside Mission Sermons*, p. 18; Talmage, *Old Wells dug Out*, p. 239. xxviii. 1-6.—T. Gasquoine, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 57. xxviii. 7-10.—*Ibid.*, p. 93. xxviii. 11-15.—*Ibid.*, p. 108.

Chap. xxviii., ver. 14.—"And so we went toward Rome."

WE have here:—

I. The accomplishment of a long-cherished purpose by the Apostle. From an early date in his ministry his heart had been set on visiting the imperial city. Take heart then, my brother. No matter what may be the Rome on which you have set your desire, if it be but to bless and benefit your fellows and honour Christ, be sure that for you, too, there will come a day when you will be able to sympathise with Paul and Luke when they say, "So we went toward Rome."

II. We have in these words something that reminds us that Paul's purpose was not attained precisely in the way in which at one time he had expected it would be realised. One cannot read his letter to the Romans without feeling that when he wrote its chapters the Apostle did not dream of entering the imperial city as a prisoner. Now, many among us could tell of similar things in our own histories. We set our hearts on some enterprise of benevolence, or on the attainment of some post of usefulness, and we get it ultimately, but it comes to us accompanied with something else of which we had at first no thought. It is to keep us through all our efforts at the feet of

Jesus, and to impel us, from first to last, to depend entirely upon Him.

III. While Paul's entrance into Rome was not quite what he at one time expected it would be, yet it really accomplished all he desired. The Jews, indeed, would not receive the truth at his lips, but he found a rich harvest among the Gentiles. And what forum even could contain the myriads to whom Paul has preached in his noble letters? And who may attempt to reckon up the millions who will yet read them in future ages, when the discourses of to-day shall have passed into oblivion? Yes, it is true, prisoner as he was, Paul went to Rome in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

W. M. TAYLOR, *The Limitations of Life*, p. 264.

REFERENCE: xxviii. 14.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 45.

Chap. xxviii., vers. 14, 15.—"So we went toward Rome," etc.

SEEDS of Life.

I. The words of my text describe very simply St. Paul's entry into Rome by the Appian Way, a prisoner, nearly two thousand years ago. How much has risen and fallen in those two thousand years? Millions upon millions of men and women have come into the light of our sun and passed away also; but this fact of St. Paul's entry into Rome does not pass away. We know that he was a life-seed, carrying life; we know that that life has wrought these great changes; that life is our inheritance and lives in us, and will never die. This we know *now*. The clever foolishness of the most foolish knowledge-worshipper of modern times acknowledges St. Paul to have been a great power. But—how was it then at the time? how looked the seed which had so mighty a growth?

II. I have often thought St. Paul's last ten miles into Rome the most fearful contrast this world ever saw, the most splendid triumph of life matched against force and impossible mountains of evil. There is something terribly real in that single man going into the gorgeous pit of hell, which was Rome, in the sunny spring day, down the flowery slopes of the Alban hills and along the great street, and matching his spirit calmly and quietly against the crushing magnificence of temples, palaces, fortresses, legions, and empires. Truly this was a seed of life, an immortal germ, living now and ever growing, though Rome has perished and many an imperial city since! But then, it was only one poor prisoner. When we see any one like

St. Paul, distinctly labouring for others and the good of life, we see a seed of life, and can never calculate the greatness it may be. Each and every one of us can be a seed power, can be a life able to sow itself, as part of the life of God on earth.

E. THRING, *Uppingham Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 353.

REFERENCES: xxviii. 14, 15.—*Good Words*, vol. iii., p. 255. xxviii. 15.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 9.

Chap. xxviii., ver. 20.—"The Hope of Israel."

IF we turn to inquire historically what were the elements in the Christian faith by virtue of which chiefly it worked and spread in the early days after the death of Jesus, we find one at least of the most important to have been the conviction among His followers that in Him the hope of a Messiah was fulfilled. Rather, I should say, this was the central belief round which others are grouped, either supporting it or belonging to it as consequences. Even a belief so fundamental and so influential as that in the resurrection of Jesus seems to have been viewed chiefly as proving or confirming His Messiahship. That was the aspect of the significance of the resurrection which especially struck men in the first age of the Church.

I. Many thoughtful men at the present day feel that it is impossible to find any sure basis for Theism itself, apart from belief in Christianity. And there is an unquestionable tendency now for doubters who are logical thinkers to assume purely an agnostic position. Hence the supreme importance of establishing the historical truth of the great facts of Christianity, even for the sake of belief in the existence of God. The agnostic is bound to face the question how he will account satisfactorily for the existence of Christianity. For if the gospel narrative is true, we have in this a direct proof of the existence of God and manifestation of His character.

II. What were the predominant characteristics in the conception of the Christ, which were seized upon in the faith that Jesus was the Christ, and retained still as the most essential features, even though by the fact of being applied to Jesus they were marvellously transformed? First, to say that Jesus was the Christ was to assert that in Him the heart's yearnings would find their final satisfaction. If He was the Christ, there was no need to look for another. The long vista of expectation was closed with His form. The conception of the Messiah and His reign took different shapes. Especially there is the important distinction between the representatives of portions of

the Jewish Apocalyptic literature, in which He is invested with something of a supernatural glory, and the times of His coming connected more and more with a last judgment and the beginning of a new age, and on the other hand the simpler anticipations of a King who would restore the kingdom of Judah and Israel to more than the glory of the days of David and Solomon. Again, the Messiah would be in a sense altogether special, the God-appointed Saviour to deliver the nation from their enemies, their internal dissensions and sins; a King to rule over them in righteousness and peace. The stamp of God's authority would be visibly on Him, the favour of God would be manifestly with Him. Hence it was that the Jews called the Messiah "the Son of God." With this we must combine the thought of the kingdom over which He would rule. The restored and glorious kingdom of Israel and Judah was even a more universal object of hope than the Messiah. There were periods in Jewish history, such as that of the Maccabees, when there seems to have been no expectation of a personal Messiah; but even at such times the kingdom was looked for, though under another form of government. But when the expectation of a Messiah flourished, as in the time of our Lord's earthly life and before, His coming was necessarily connected with the setting up of the kingdom, and the expected character of the kingdom illustrates His character. The Kingdom of God it was called, and the Kingdom of Heaven. "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." It would be the final dispensation of Him who rules all things, permanent, sure to prevail over all human opposition. Thus to say that the work of Jesus was the bringing in of the Kingdom of God was above all to say that His work was founded upon the will of God the Eternal, strong with the strength of heaven.

V. H. STANTON, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Dec. 4th, 1879.

REFERENCES: xxviii. 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 516; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 1st series, p. 146.

Chap. xxviii., ver. 28.

THE Churches Warned.

Note in what points, if in any, we may claim affinity with these representatives of Judaism at the eventful epoch of its dying struggle with the infant Church.

I. They, like us, had long been in possession of exclusive privileges, and accustomed to survey without emotion the great mass of mankind deprived of them.

II. Note the influence of long-continued and exclusive privileges on the opinions and the doctrinal belief of those enjoying them. It is curious, yet melancholy, to observe, with what facility advantages possessed by a few for the good of many may come to be regarded as prerogatives belonging to the few to the entire exclusion of the many. If the Jews, with an unfinished revelation and a heavy ceremonial yoke upon their necks, could dream of an exclusive right to God's compassions, what may not we, without preventing grace, infer from our unclouded light and our unshackled freedom? And if this grand error had a tendency to vitiate their whole view of divine truth, what security have we that an analogous effect may not be realised in our experience?

III. If we are conscious of inadequate exertions and of cold affections in the great cause of missions, let us think of Israel according to the flesh, and of what he was and what he is—remember that such revolutions are still possible—that if we do not value Christianity enough to share it with the heathen, they may yet become possessed of it at our expense—nay, that while the glorious gospel is so commonly neglected and despised among ourselves, the word of this salvation is already sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it—are hearing it.

J. A. ALEXANDER, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, p. 195.

REFERENCE: xxviii. 38.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 316.

ROMANS.

Chap. i., ver. 1.—"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ."

I. THE fact that a man like Paul, brought up as he was with such a brain and such a heart, turned the wrong way at first, should be capable of burning with such enthusiasm for a man of whose history he knew very little that was real or true until he saw Him in heavenly glory, that after that he should live to be the rejoicing slave of Jesus Christ,—is it a wonder that such a fact should weigh with me ten times more than the denial of the highest intellect of this world who gives me, by the very terms that he uses, the conviction that he knows nothing about what I believe? He talks as if he did, but he knows nothing about it. St. Paul knew the Lord Christ; and therefore, heart and soul, mind, body, and brain, he belonged to Jesus Christ, even as His born slave.

II. Let us try to understand what is meant by a slavery which is a liberty. There is no liberty but in doing right. There is no freedom but in living out of the deeps of our nature—not out of the surface. We are the born slaves of Christ. But then, He is liberty Himself, and all His desire is that we should be such noble, true, right creatures that we never can possibly do or think a thing that shall bind even a thread round our spirits and make us feel as if we were tied anywhere. He wants us to be free—not as the winds, not to be free as the man who owns no law, but to be free by being law, by being right, by being truth. St. Paul spent his whole life, all his thoughts, all his energies, simply to obey his Lord and Master, and so he was the one free man—not the only free man: there were some more amongst the apostles; and by his preaching here and there, there started up free men, or, at least, men who were beginning to grow free by beginning to be the slaves of Christ.

G. MACDONALD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 108.

REFERENCES: i. 1.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 254; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 75; H. E. Lewis, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 220. i. 1-4.—A. M. Fairbairn, *The City of God*, p. 215. i. 1-7.—*Ibid.*, pp. 41-9; *Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ix., p. 105; vol. xi., pp. 309, 458; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 108; J. Vaughan,

Sermons 6th series, p. 37; W. B. Pope, *Sermons*, p. 175; W. J. Knox-Little, *The Mystery of the Passion*, p. 123. i. 2.—Fletcher, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 1. i. 2-5.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 253. i. 3, 4.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. x., p. 149.

Chap. i., ver. 7.—"Called to be saints."

I. THERE is a saintship which lies in the eternal appointment of God, which is the root and beginning of all. There is a saintship in the having been deliberately and designedly set apart by others as a holy vessel, which is independent of your own will. There is a saintship in your own voluntary surrender of yourself at different times to God, which is the responsible saintship. There is a saintship in the secret leadings and mouldings and teachings of the Holy Spirit, which is real and actual saintship. There is a saintship which lies in a holy, self-denying life, the copy of Jesus, which is apparent and active saintship. And there is a saintship in perfection being still beyond you, not reached nor yet conceived—that satisfying likeness in which one day you shall awake, capable of God's presence, your whole body, soul, and spirit concentrated to one object, in one harmonious serving, and that is the saintship of hope, the design of your redemption, the end of your creation.

II. There are many to whom it is a very small attraction to be what is commonly meant by a "religious person,"—a name which often conveys, if not narrowness and severity, yet certainly something very moderate and almost quite negative. Do not be a "religious person"; be a saint, be an eminent servant of God; determine that you will be a great Christian. The higher the mark, the easier it is to some minds to reach it; and the reason why some simply do nothing is because they have not yet conceived great things. Do not be content with commonplaces; do not be like Christians about you. Throw your ambition into a channel worthy of the capabilities of which you are conscious. Leave beaten tracks and conventional standards, and the trite, ordinary ways of so-called Christians: be a saint.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, vol. xx., p. 17.

REFERENCES: i. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., p. 210; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 187. i. 8-15.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 91. i. 11, 12.—J. S. Pearsall, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 184; vol. vi., p. 198.

Chap. i., ver. 14.—"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise."

I. THE principle underlying these words is that personal possession of any peculiar privilege is of the nature of a trust, and

involves the obligation that the privilege shall be used by the individual, not for his own pleasure or profit merely, but for the welfare of those who are not similarly blessed. What I have that another has not is to be used by me, not for my own aggrandisement, but for the good of that other as well as for my own. The greatness of exceptional endowment, of whatever sort it may be, carries with it an obligation to similar greatness of service. The highest of all, by virtue of his very elevation, is to be the servant of all. The power of the strong is—shall I say?—divinely mortgaged in the interests of the weak; the sufferer whom I have the means of relieving has a God-given claim upon me for that relief; and the ignorant, whom I am able to instruct, is by God entitled to that instruction at my hands. He who has is in debt to him who has not. This is clearly the true interpretation of such a parable as that of the good Samaritan, and indeed it is the true and proper outcome of the gospel itself.

II. And this principle, thus introduced by the gospel, furnishes that which is needed to meet the perils of our modern civilisation. The tendency of the times is to increase the separation between different classes in the community. The gospel, far from blotting out all distinctions in society, as the Communist would do, makes the very privileges which mark the distinction between a higher class and a lower the basis of obligation, so that the one is the debtor of the other, and the obligation increases with the increase of the privilege. In this regard it is a solemn thing to be the possessor of a special blessing; for, while it is a boon, it always brings a responsibility, and makes its receiver a debtor to others who are less fortunate than himself. That is the Christian principle; and when men generally accept and act upon it the millennium shall have begun.

W. M. Taylor, *Contrary Winds*, p. 186.

This text raises a question on each of three points, which in mercantile phraseology would be designated the Business, the Debt, and the Composition.

I. The business: the nature, sphere, and extent of the trade in which Paul's talents were laid out and his capital invested. Paul was a diligent and energetic man. Had he been a merchant, the keenest art in all the exchange could not have overreached him. He embarked all in one business, and then pushed it to the uttermost. He did not neglect the necessary and lawful affairs of this life, but his treasure was in heaven and his heart followed it.

II. The debt: how, with whom, and to what extent he had become involved. He was diligent in his business, and yet was not able to pay his way. Paul owed all that he possessed and himself besides to Christ His Redeemer. But he could not directly pay any part of his debt: a man's goodness cannot reach to God. The Lord to whom he owes all has transferred his claim to the poor, and Paul is bound to honour it. Paul cannot reach the treasury of heaven to pay his instalments there; Paul's great Creditor, therefore, makes the debt payable on earth; offices are open everywhere to receive it. Wherever there is a creature of the same flesh and blood with ourselves in want, spiritual or temporal, or both combined, there a legal claim is presented to the disciples of Christ; and if they repudiate, they dishonour their Lord.

III. The composition: in what manner and to what extent the insolvent proposed to pay. Let it be carefully observed here at the outset that the most devoted life of a saved man is not offered as an adequate return to the Saviour. As well might he purchase his pardon at first from the Judge as repay the Redeemer for it afterwards. He pays, not in the spirit of bondage, but in the spirit of grateful love; not that he looks to a time when the debt will be paid off, but that he delights in the act of paying it. Having announced his principle, the Apostle plunged at once into its practical details—verse 15, "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits*, p. 370.

THE Adaptation of the Gospel to Civilised and Uncivilised Races.

Grant that the Christian revelation is true, and you cannot well oppose its diffusion; acknowledge that there is one God, and that He is revealed to mankind in Jesus Christ, and you cannot allege that it is unnecessary or unwise to make Him known throughout the world. And it will be found that this gospel can take hold of men of all grades of civilisation, from the very lowest to the very highest, because it meets the moral nature and wants of all men, speaks to the conscience and tells how men are lost and how they may be saved.

I. On that conviction acted that illustrious missionary who, though born a Hebrew of the Hebrews and educated in all the pride and prejudice of a Pharisee, once he had perceived the knowledge of Christ and caught the spirit of His world-endearing love, threw himself with an ardour at once generous and saga-

cious into the ministry of reconciliation, and made his appeal without respect of persons or races, to the Jew and the Greek, to the barbarian, to the Scythian, to the bond and to the free. Is not this for our admonition to-day? Ought not the Church of God to turn the same countenance of goodwill upon all nations and on all classes in a nation without respect to persons?

II. Perhaps the Church at home has become a little sickly through over-much self-consciousness, and is like one who grows weak and somewhat peevish by living, so to speak, too much indoors. Let the Church, as represented by her vigorous sons and loving daughters, go forth into the open air on the great areas of the world, and a new glow of health will come upon her cheek and a new pulse of strength into all her veins, and she will have a sweeter temper and a clearer voice and a firmer grasp than ever. In the wisdom of God the thoughts and ways of men are slowly but surely being shaped to glorious ends. Presentiment of better things on earth sweeps in with every force that stirs our souls. At such times surely the Church of God should arise and put on strength!

D. FRASER, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 305.

REFERENCES: i. 14.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vii., p. 280; W. P. Lockhart, *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 214; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 11; R. W. Church, *Human Life*, p. 193; C. S. Robinson, *Sermons on Neglected Texts*, p. 80. i. 14, 15.—C. Symes, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 363; J. Culross, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 289. i. 14-16.—*Ibid.*, p. 395; J. Edmunds, *Sermons in a Village Church*, p. 247; H. W. Beecher, *Forty-eight Sermons*, vol. i., p. 181. i. 15.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 217. i. 15, 16.—J. W. Burn, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 195; H. P. Hughes, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxii., p. 273.

Chap. i., ver. 16.—"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

I. ST. PAUL rests the glory and the power of the gospel on its influence on every one who believeth: that is, on its persuasion of and acceptance by the heart and mind of each individual man. You see what great results such an admission brings in its train. At once the individual responsibility of man assumes a sacred and inviolable character. If it be so, all attempts to coerce and subjugate men's consciences in the matter of religious belief are not only as we know futile and vain, but are sins against that liberty of reception of His gospel which God has made our common inheritance. The acceptance of the gospel, and of all

that belongs to the gospel, must be free and unforced, the resignation of the heart, with its desires and affections, to God.

II. Let us remember that not St. Paul only, nor every Christian minister only, but every Christian man and woman among us, is set for the declaration and promulgation of the gospel. Some are called upon to preach its truths; all to proclaim their power by the example of a holy life. The gospel of Christ is still the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. This is the reason why we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: not ashamed, though the track of the Church has been marked out not with peace but with the sword; not ashamed, though two-thirds of this fair world still lie in outer darkness; because we find that in the midst of all this the gospel has not lost one atom of its life-giving power, that wherever a soul lays hold on the Redeemer by faith, whether in the corrupt Church of Rome, or in the Reformed Church of England, or in any of the endless varieties of religious opinion and communion, or apart from all visible companies of Christians, there enters a new life unto God, a change into the Lord's image, a glorious progress in holiness here, tending to perfection hereafter. H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 176.

NOTE:—

I. Some grounds for sympathising with the Apostle's statement. (1) We are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because it vindicates the abandonment of our crucified Lord by God. The death of Jesus is seen to be at once a sublime satisfaction and an illustrious vindication of the justice of God. (2) We are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because it reveals the love of God. (3) We are not ashamed of the doctrines of the gospel, for they vindicate the justice and they glorify the love of God. We are not ashamed of them, because they bear the stamp and have the ring of heavenly wisdom.

II. Experience has vindicated the Apostle's reason. "It is the power of God unto salvation." The testimony of individuals in this matter is endorsed and sustained by the general testimony of history.

W. J. WOODS, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 211.

Chap. i., ver. 16.—"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

I. IN Paul's day the world was grown very weary of words which had in them no power at all, or, if power, at least not

power to save. Weary of words which promised life, but had no power to give it; brain-spun speculations about God and man which made nothing clear, which had no influence whatever over the bad passions of the individual, which brought no hope to the poor or the slave; in these Greek theories there was no gospel of power unto salvation. Weary too of words which had behind them the terrific and sometimes brutal strength of Roman legions, but used it not to elevate subject races, but only to bind the yoke firmer on the degenerate peoples.

II. In the midst of all this St. Paul carried what he knew to be a Divine message of help—God's own miraculous word, charged with a loftier wisdom than that of Greece, backed by a mightier authority than that of Rome, and instinct with spiritual life and everlasting salvation for men of every land. It was the revelation of God's righteousness in His Son, and of God's life by His Spirit.

III. The power which resides in a word, or which operates through a word, requires one, and no more than one, condition for its operation—it must be believed. Faith is no exceptional demand on the gospel's part. It is the condition of all power which comes by word, whether it be a word that teaches or a word that commands. Salvation must come by faith, because faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. It is therefore to him only who believes its message, but to every one who does believe it, that the gospel proves to be God's power unto salvation. Faith on the part of the hearer is that which must liberate the Divine might, which resides in the word ready to operate. Before you call the gospel weak, ask how you have received it. The faith which has to be exercised about any word varies with the nature of the word. This word from God is spiritual, and it asks not an intellectual but a spiritual faith, a moral submission, a religious surrender of the whole being to the influence of the truth told and the authority of the Person speaking. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation—only you must do it the justice to believe it.

J. Oswald Dykes, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 1.

The Power of God in the Gospel.

I. The first element of the power of the gospel which we meet with in the most complete treatise which inspired men have delivered to us on the subject is the gospel doctrine of sin. The sense of sin is among the most real and deep of human experiences. Men were groaning in spirit over the

question, when the gospel offered its solution and cast a flood of light upon the nature and the genesis of sin. The Bible declares what man's heart has ever felt to be a truth, that sin is the independent self-originated act of the free will of the creature in opposition to the known mind and will of God. It declares also what man feels in his heart to be true, and has struggled in vain to realise, that sin does not fully belong to man, though it is in him and is his own work. Through the gospel sin was felt and known in its dread reality as it had never been known before; but men learned, too, that it was as essentially weaker than righteousness, as flesh is weaker than spirit, as Satan is weaker than Christ. They learnt that it might be conquered, that it ought to be conquered, and they believed that it would be conquered.

II. The second element of the power of the gospel lies in the atonement offered for the sins of the world, which it proclaims. Man seeks to know God as He is; and man only rests and hopes when he sees that not a promise only, but the nature, the name of God is on his side. The name of God was manifest in Christ and wrought redemption. All the attributes of the Divine character are here seen in their essence —the radiant colours blended in one white beam of love. And this is the glory of the gospel, this is the power of that salvation which is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. The third element of the power of the gospel is the doctrine of the incarnation. The world whose air the incarnate God had breathed, whose paths He had trodden, whose load He had borne, whose form He had put on and carried up with Him visibly to celestial zones, could not be a dying world, could not be a devil's world; it must live to be a Divine world and a kingdom of heaven.

IV. The gospel was a power unto salvation, because it opened heaven to man's spirit, and brought down the power of the world to come to govern his will and purify his heart.

J. Baldwin Brown, *The Divine Life in Man*, p. 92.

References: i. 16.—*Sermons for Boys and Girls*, p. 86; *Homilist*, new series, vol. i., p. 529; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 61; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 159; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 54; H. P. Liddon, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 297; S. W. Winter, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 200; T. Gasquoine, *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 364; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 267; W. Woods, *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 211; R. W. Dale, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 305; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 96; H. P. Liddon, *University Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 242; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 10th series, p. 272; Bishop Simpson, *Sermons*, p. 97; *Saturday Evening*, pp. 22-43.

Chap. i., vers. 16, 17.

CONSIDER :—

I. The condition to which man has reduced himself by transgression, which makes "the power of God unto salvation" the pressing and constant need of his soul. Power is of God, because power is life, and life is of God. If power be gone, God only can renew it. Man is manifestly godlike in the serene composure of his being; he knows the struggles to live up to it, yet falls back into the gloom of the nether abyss. It is a sight of unspeakable piteousness. It would be an agony to angels, it would be an agony to Christ if His mighty arm were not nigh with salvation.

II. What evidence upon this point the pagan systems supply. I believe that, regarded in their very highest aspect—that is, in the light of their aspirings and strivings—they are solemn witnesses to this want of spiritual power, by their very efforts to supply it, and to generate that force which can come forth from God alone. It is very easy to use the word idol as a word of scorn; but it is not so easy to define clearly what it means, and to explain the place which it occupies in history. The world's idolatries are the nurses of the most grinding tyranny and the most disgusting sensuality. This is their universal character; to this they inevitably incline. But if any man supposes that idolatries were invented for the express purpose of promoting sensuality and tyranny, by giving them a heavenly sanction, he places himself at a point of view from which it is simply impossible that he can understand humanity and the gospel. The Gentile idolatries were the power of man, striving at first in the true direction, though in sinful, guilty ignorance of the true God, who is "not far from any one of us," but mastered to the end, like all that is born of the will of the flesh, by corrupting elements, and made thereby ministers of widespread desolations and death. The pagan was suffered to feel after God, because God was preparing to reveal Himself. The world was suffered to grope in its darkness, for already the gates of the East were opening, and the flush of the rising day-star began to glow over the world.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Divine Life in Man*, p. 70.

THE Essential Nature of Salvation.

I. There is no safety but in soundness, and wherever there is soundness there must be ultimate safety. These two principles are comprehended in the original sense of the words, both in Greek and Latin, which are rendered by the one word

salvation. But I believe that in the view of sound philosophy, as well as in etymology, the meaning of health-wholeness is the fundamental one, and that we shall get into much mischief, in spiritual things at any rate, if we look at the matter in any other way. He who would save man must heal him: in other words, he must re-quicken that vital power which man lost at the Fall, the re-quickening of which will be regeneration and salvation.

II. Salvation *is* a deliverance—an escape from death and hell. Salvation *is* the possession of a complete and imperishable bliss. But there is that in it which underlies both these conditions, and through which alone they can be completely realised; and that is the gradual unfolding of the Divine life in the soul—the recovery by the soul of that vital force which in its rudiment man lost in Eden, and which in its maturity man regains in Christ. "The just shall live by faith." That is the basis on which the doctrinal structure rests. Life was lost in the Fall. Life is recovered in Christ; to live in Christ is to be saved. To know Him, to be capable of knowing His mind, and sympathising with His heart, and delighting in His work throughout eternity, is to be blessed in all the boundless blessedness of heaven. But everything depends on our regarding faith, not as a dead condition which any other term might as well supply, but as a vital act; just as vital a relation to the spiritual being as the appropriation and assimilation of the bread which perishes is to the life of the body in this present world. We live by the bread which perishes, as to the body; we live by Christ, the bread of life, as to the spirit. The sense of the body is the organ by which the outward bread is appropriated for its sustenance; faith is the corresponding organ by which, in the inner man, Christ is received with the nourishment of the soul.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Divine Life in Man*, p. 122.

REFERENCES: i. 16, 17.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 161; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 364.

Chap. i., ver. 17.—"For therein is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith." R.V.

I. THE most characteristic and weighty expression in this verse is of course *God's righteousness*, the revelation of which makes the gospel to be a saving power. The Pauline use of the word righteousness is this: righteousness is the condition of any man's being justified, vindicated in law or acquitted of blame by his righteous Judge. And the characteristic of the gospel—

its joy and glory—lies here, that it has revealed how that condition of our justification has been reached. By its disclosure of that for the trustful acceptance of mankind, it becomes a message with power unto salvation.

II. We are now in a position to see in what sense this righteousness revealed in the gospel is God's. It is God's in its inception; for He it was who in the beginning, when we were yet sinners, sent forth His Son. It is God's in its achievement; for He it was—the Son of the Father—who, in the fulness of time, made many righteous by His own obedience. It is God's in its revelation; for He it was—the Holy Spirit—who comforts us by His teaching, who first through the apostles of our Lord discovered it to all nations for the obedience of faith.

III. God's righteousness of, or *out of*, faith. The relation of God's righteousness is thus expressed by its very name, on both sides—toward God and toward man. As respects God, it is *His*, in a sense, opposed to its being mine; His as its Author, Originator, meritorious Achiever, and proper Proprietor. The simple personal possessive marks His relation to it; it is God's. But as respects my relation to it—it comes to me, stands me in stead, is reckoned to me for my acquittal "by faith," in consequence of my believing and trusting in Him. Just because this righteousness is another's, it can only be made available for me by my relying upon that other and accepting it as a gratuitous present from His kindness. Because it is God's, it comes to me out of faith; and it is out of faith, that it may be by grace.

J. Oswald Dykes, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 13.

References: i. 17.—G. Ireland, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 222; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 567; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 83. i. 18.—*Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 157; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 381; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 561. i. 18-21.—Bennett, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 325.

Chap. i., vers. 18-32.

The Natural History of Paganism.

I. St. Paul's first proposition is, that from the first the heathen knew enough of God from His works to render them without excuse for not worshipping Him.

II. Secondly, the Apostle declares that the heathen have culpably repressed and hindered from its just influence the truth which they did know respecting God. He traces polytheistic and idolatrous worship to its root. (1) Its first origin

he finds in a refusal to walk honestly by such light as nature afforded. For this primary step in the very old and very fatal path of religious declension men could excuse themselves under no plea of ignorance. (2) The next step followed surely. That truth about God's real nature and properties, which men would not strive fairly to express in their worship, became obscured. Vanity and errors entered into human reasonings on religion. "Men became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened." (3) The third step downward was practical folly in religion. Nature worship involved symbol worship. Symbol worship rapidly degenerated into sheer idol worship.

III. It is in this deplorable and criminal perversion of the truth, this religious apostasy, that Paul finds a key to the personal and social vices of heathendom. When the human heart shut out the self-manifestation of the true God, refused to know Him, and worshipped base creatures in His room, it cut itself off by its own act from the source of moral light and moral strength. A bad and false religion must breed a bad and false character. It ought never to be forgotten that heathenism is not simply a misfortune in the world for which the bulk of men are to be pitied but not blamed. It is a crime—a huge, next to world-wide, age-long crime, with its roots in a deep hatred of God, and bearing a prolific crop of utterly inexcusable and hideous vices. To prove this is the end for which the passage is introduced by St. Paul.

J. Oswald Dykes, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 25.

References: i. 19.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 303; G. Dawson, *Sermons on Disputed Points*, p. 49; F. W. Farrar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 289. i. 20.—G. Salmon, *Non-Miraculous Christianity*, pp. 74, 94; R. S. Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God*, p. 1. i. 20, 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1763. i. 21.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 20; H. W. Beecher, *Catholic Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 97. i. 21-5.—*Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 297.

Chap. i., ver. 25.—"They worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator."

Nature Worship.

Consider whether our religion or our irreligion is so free from the idolatrous element as we generally suppose, and if not what are the appearances which bear the most resemblance to the false religion of the ancient world.

I. Though the impious among ourselves no longer pray to stocks and stones, or beasts and birds, or moon and stars, there is still a strong taint of idolatry perceptible in our religion,

science, literature, business—nay, our very language. Yes, I say our language. Can it be reverence, religious awe, that prompts the suppression of what would seem the most indispensable of all words—the incommunicable name of God? This explanation is precluded by the levity with which men often make that venerable name the theme of ribald jests and the burden of blasphemous imprecation. No, the name seems to be shunned because it means too much, suggests too much, concedes too much.

II. Not only is the grand and simple name of God exchanged for a descriptive title, such as Supreme Being, or an abstract term, the Deity, but still more readily and frequently is God supplanted by a goddess, and her name is Nature. This form of idolatry has all the aid that Art can render to Nature. The idolater of Nature cannot but be an idolater of Art, and here the coincidence with heathenism is not one of principle only, but of outward form. The high art of the ancients was a part of their religion. It was not an idle tickling of the sense or fancy. In the perfection of their imitation and the beauty of their original creations they did honour to the god of their idolatry, not indirectly, as the author of their skill, but most directly, as its only object. As long as man retains the sensibilities which God has given him and yet remains unwilling to retain God in his thoughts, the voice of Nature will be louder than the voice of God. If God is not in the fire or the wind or the earthquake, these will nevertheless sweep the multitude before them, and the still small voice of revelation will be heard only by a chosen few. When certain causes now at work have had their full effect, the worshipper of God will again be like Elijah on Mount Carmel, while the vast mixed multitude are worshippers of Nature.

J. A. ALEXANDER, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, p. 61.

REFERENCES: i. 26-9.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 34. i. 28.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 346. i. 32.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ix., p. 213. i.—*Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 1. ii. 1.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 491. ii. 2-4.—*Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 67.

Chap. ii., ver. 4.—"Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

I. THE Jews thought that St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, was tempting them to despise the privileges of their birth and election. He retorts the charge. He asks the Jew how he could dare to despise the riches which God had bestowed upon him.

What were those riches? The Law and the Covenant were the pledges and witnesses of their wealth; they could be converted into wealth, but they were not the thing itself. They spoke of a living God near to the Israelite; of a God of goodness, forbearance, longsuffering. These names were given to him in every page of the Divine oracles; the names were illustrated by a series of facts. To boast of the Law and the Covenant and the Scriptures, as if they were not revelations of Him, was to deny and despise them. To accept them as revelations of Him, and not to believe that He was good and longsuffering and forbearing, was to deny and despise both them and Him. To admit that He was good and forbearing and longsuffering at all, and not to believe that He was so at every moment, to themselves and to all men, was to play with words, to despise their sense, their power, their blessing.

II. It is even so with each one of us. Our New Testament, our Baptism, our Communion, testify of a God good and forbearing and longsuffering. Now, if this goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering belong to the very name and character of Him in whom we are living and moving and having our being, they constitute a wealth upon which we may always draw. The more we call them to mind, the more we believe in them, the more truly and actively they become ours. We may become moulded into their likeness, we may show them forth. This is that kingly inheritance which the Scriptures and the Sacraments make known to us. If we enter into the meaning of the festival of Epiphany, we shall believe that Christ's glory may be manifested in the greatest weakness, because it is the glory of goodness, of forbearance, of longsuffering. We shall ask that that glory may humble us and lead us day by day to repentance. We shall be sure that there will be at last a full revelation of those riches which eye hath not seen nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, but which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 97.

REFERENCES: ii. 4.—J. Foster, *Lectures*, p. 351; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1714. ii. 4, 5.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 187. ii. 4-6.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 423; new series, vol. iii., p. 522; W. H. Brown, *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 149. ii. 5.—G. Calthrop, *Words Spoken to My Friends*, p. 269; W. Dorling, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 200. ii. 7. *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 327; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 39. ii. 8.—*Ibid.*, p. 247 ii. 9-11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 18; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 373. ii. 11.—H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3152. ii. 12.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 98.

Chap. ii., vers. 12-16.—"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law," etc.

I. WHAT does the Apostle mean when he says that certain persons shall perish without law? Is he aggravating their condemnation, and telling us that they shall have judgment without mercy, be dealt with as lawless outcasts for whom no law was ever intended and whose case no law could ever reach? It would seem as if some persons have thought so, but there could not be a greater mistake. What the Apostle means is, as they have not had the written law to live by, so shall it not appear against them in judgment. They shall be dealt with so that no man may accuse the justice of the Judge. They will not be dealt with according to the rigor of a law which they never knew, and therefore never could obey. There was a code of law under which they lived, written not on tables of stone like the covenant of old, but on the "fleshy tables of the heart"—the code of conscience and of reason; and by this law they will be judged, if they have not acted up to the light which they possessed.

II. There is a great day of retribution appointed. It must be, it cannot but be an awful thing to have sinned against the God whom our Scriptures have revealed to us. Jesus Christ will be our Judge. He who was tempted—He who in all things was made like unto His brethren—the man Christ Jesus, will judge His fellow-man. Then we may draw near with full assurance of faith, trusting to the merits of our Saviour, the mercy of our Judge. "Not simply," writes one of our greatest divines, "because He is a man therefore shall He judge; for then by the same reason every man could judge and none consequently, because no man will be judged if every man were only to judge; but because of the Three Persons which are God, He only is also the Son of man, and therefore, for His affinity with their nature, for His sense of their infirmities, for His appearance to their eyes, most fit to represent the greatest mildness and sweetness of equity in the severity of that just and all-embracing judgment." Let us see, then, that while life remains to us, we repose our confidence wholly on the death of Christ.

BISHOP ATLEY, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 334, new series.

REFERENCES: ii. 12-25.—*Homilist*, vol. vii., p. 424. ii. 13.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 71. ii. 13, 14.—A. Jessopp, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 2[illegible]. ii. 13-15.—H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*. 4th series, p. 394.

Chap. ii., ver. 14.—'These, not having a law are a law unto themselves."

I. THE great teachers who have seen in the natural man nothing but an enemy of God and an alien from Him have gathered the material of their systems from the pages of the New Testament. But the larger or wider view of the affinity between the human and the Divine natures, which is more in harmony with the instincts of our own hearts and with the later growths of time, may appeal with at least as much confidence to the same authority. There are indisputable truths underlying the doctrine of human corruption and depravity. But, on the other side, there is truth no less certain, which keeps growing in importance with the growth of human knowledge and aspiration. Our text shows that St. Paul did not overlook the evidences of a relationship between the human will and the Divine Will, as in his address at Athens, where he could not but have been moved by the associations of the spot in which so many seekers after truth had laboured. He recognises that God is not far from any one of us, that in Him we all live and move and have our being. Christian life, moreover, reaches its highest expression in consciousness of the relationship between the human spirit and the Divine. The law of Christ is the law of liberty; human nature enjoys true freedom in the ordered and regulated harmony of duty and affection, of reason and will. The soul may be so crippled as only to feel the wretchedness of perceiving the good which it cannot realise for itself, but the love of Christ restores it and brings it back to its true self. Corruption and sin obscure but do not destroy the higher affinities. The attraction of Christ's example—the power of His life and death—put an end to its estrangement. It ceases to be an alien from God, and stands again in the relation of a son.

II. We must surrender ourselves to God if we would have Him reveal Himself to us. The more that we submit ourselves in this spirit to the teaching of human life and of the human soul, the less shall we confine our sense of mystery and awe to the future and the unseen—the more profoundly shall we feel that in walking on this firm earth we are treading on holy ground, and that the glory which fills the heavens shines also in the light of common day. The silent influence of this conviction has been felt by all schools of religious thought; each of them practically acknowledges that human nature, rightly interrogated, is the best interpreter of the revelation of God. Human nature reverently studied and rightly understood is the bridge that spans the interval between God and the world. In studying

this we are studying the facts that are nearest to us. Here is something definite and tangible, something about which patient truth-lovers may at length agree. Those who fall back on the witness of human nature and look at religion in its human aspect are obeying the irresistible tendency of our own modern habits of thought; but they do not, therefore, surrender the truth or reality of revelation. They are only doing what others have done, who at first have feared entirely to lose sight of old familiar facts if they quitted the point of view which is being abandoned by the age in which they live, but have found that when they have shifted with the times they see the same truth, under a different aspect indeed, but no less clear than before.

W. W. JACKSON, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, April 27th, 1882.

REFERENCES: ii. 14.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 178; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 68. ii. 14, 15. —R. W. Dale, *The Evangelical Record*, p. 41. ii. 15.—J. B. Lightfoot, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 102; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 94; Archbishop Magee, *Sermons at St. Saviour's, Bath*, p. 147; F. W. Farrar, *The Silence and Voices of God*, p. 27.

Chap ii., ver. 16.

THE Secrets of the Soul.

I. We live in a strange secrecy, even hidden from our most loving and intimate friends. If any one of us were asked to relate his own life, he might relate two lives which would seem all but independent of each other. He might tell when he was born, where he had lived, where he had passed year after year, what persons he had lived with, what he had done by way of study or amusement, what had happened to him that was remarkable, what events had made a great difference in his life. Or, again, he might tell quite a different story. He might tell to what thoughts his mind naturally turned in the moment of leisure, what unfinished pictures were, as it were, hung up all round the chamber of his soul. He might tell of deeds done in darkness, which though actual deeds and not mere thoughts, yet are part of this secret inner life by virtue of their absolute concealment. How different these two lives would be!

II. The secret will not be kept longer than enough to serve its purpose. And woe betide the soul that uses it ill. This sacred veil cast by the Creator in front of a man's holy of holies can be used; nay, we must confess it, such is our fallen state, that it is used to hide evil of every kind. It is the special charac-

teristic of Christians that they are not of the night nor of darkness. It is with the unfruitful works of darkness that we are to have no fellowship. Let us then determine to force all our faults outwards. At whatever cost let us keep sacred to God that inner shrine which He has thus hidden with a secrecy of His own making. If we can be fair anywhere, let it be in that which God has reserved for Himself and where Christ is willing to dwell.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, 1st series, p. 266.

REFERENCES: ii. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1849; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 18; J. B. Heard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 225. ii. 17.—Spurgeon, 1st series, vol. ix., p. 214. ii. 28, 29.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. i., p. 41; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 81. ii. 29.—J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 41.

Chap. ii., ver. 13 (with chap. v., vers. 20, 21).

THE Doctrine of Sin.

In these passages we have stated or implied St. Paul's doctrine concerning sin.

I. Sin is boldly represented to have issued from the action of God, to have come to pass in some sense through Him; He and His operation are assumed to have been in some sense answerable for it. Speaking of Jews and Gentiles as comprehending between them the entire human world, St. Paul says, "God hath concluded them all in disobedience," or, literally, has shut them all up together into disobedience, the image underlying the word being the collection and enclosure of a multitude in one spot to which they have been driven or conducted. Thus, the idea of the writer would not be, by any means, that God had pronounced them all guilty of disobedience, or proved and convicted them of disobedience; such may be his thought elsewhere, but here his thought is evidently that God had somehow involved them in disobedience, had somehow occasioned their subjection to it.

II. How can the Pauline view of sin be justified? This ugly and miserable thing—how can it be shown and seen, as occurring under the plan, as accompanying and inevitably bound up with the process of the work of God? Sin comes originally from the Divine awakening in man of that spiritual germ, that moral element in which he surmounts and transcends the animal, from the Divine superinducing upon his first lower nature of a second higher nature; and it is a temporary accompaniment of the conflict between these two, an incident in the course of

progress towards a proper and happy adjustment of the relations between them. The end of the Lord is a glorious humanity, emerging at length from the confusion and travail and the history of the ages is the history of the war between that flesh and spirit, that old and new man which He has conjoined in us for the accomplishment of His grand end. He means to have mercy on all, or He would not, could not, have sown in us what has led to the concluding of all in sin.

S. A. Tipple, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 104.

Chap. ii.

The Practical Outcome of Judaism.

I. The first thing on which St. Paul lays anxious stress in this passage is this: The judgment of God according to men's works is just, inevitable, and impartial. It is a judgment according to works which the Jew ought, on theory, to challenge. For he seeks to be saved by a "law"—that is, by a thing to be done. If he is to be justified at all, it must be through the coincidence of his life with that rule of living which God gave to his nation and on which he plumes himself. Every one knows, even without any special help from revelation, that the judgment of God against the evil-doer is according to truth; and His judgment is inescapable and universal.

II. So far St. Paul has merely been laying down an abstract theory of the Divine impartiality in retribution. He has not yet spoken of the Hebrew law. He does not at first name Jew or Gentile. He addresses his antagonist simply as a man who presumes to judge others for sins of which he himself is no less guilty. At this point, however, he begins to regard his reader as a Jew, separated from the unclean and ignorant heathen by his privileged standing under the Mosaic law; only, instead of recognising the difference which this creates as telling in the Jew's favour, he unexpectedly turns it against him. It gives him nothing but a fatal pre-eminence in guilt and judgment. It is a miserable delusion to fancy that the privilege of hearing God tell us our duty lifts us above responsibility in doing it, or sets us beyond the reach of judgment for not doing it. Nay, it only confers on us, if we sin, a shameful pre-eminence in sinfulness, and when we are judged a fatal priority of condemnation.

III. All through the present discussion St. Paul has taken it for granted that the essence of criminality lies in unfaithfulness to known duty. On the same principle he now turns that very

knowledge of the law on which his Jewish countrymen relied into a weapon against them: "Wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself."

J. Oswald Dykes, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 38.

Reference: ii.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. iii., p. 151.

Chap. iii., vers. 1, 2.—"What advantage then hath the Jew? . . . Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."

Preciousness of the Bible.

I. Think of the wonderful providence which has watched over the Bible from the beginning. There is no miracle comparable to that which has preserved to us the Scriptures amid all the convulsions of society, after so many centuries of persecution, neglect, superstition, and ignorance—that we should still possess the writings of Moses in their freshness, what a miracle of providence is that!

II. The Old Testament presupposes the New. Neither would be intelligible without the other. And both alike have the same mysterious texture—call it typical, mystical, spiritual, or what you will—whereby the common events of men's lives and the ordinary course of human history are found to be expressive of heavenly truths—to be instinct with divinest teaching woven into the very midst of the sacred narrative; from the Alpha to the Omega of it are found the mysteries of redemption, the secret purposes and practices of God. And why is all this but because God Himself is in it, because His Spirit hath inspired it in every part? The Scripture is the very shrine of the Eternal—the Holy of Holies, in which the Shekinah of Glory dwelleth, and where God's voice is heard speaking to man. It is called the Word of God, less because it is His utterance than because it is Divine as well as human—shares the nature of Him whose name in heaven is even now the Word of God. And need I dwell on the grand mystery of all, the awful circumstance that the gospel not only discourses to us of the Eternal Son come in the flesh, but actually exhibits Him to us? In what relation, then, to the ancient oracles of God is our Saviour Christ found to stand as the constant witness to their infallible truth, their paramount value, their Divine origin? They are for ever on His lips. What wonder if, in reply to the question as to what was the Jews' advantage, the Apostle

answered, "Much every way," chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

J. W. BURGON, *Ninety-one Short Sermons*, No. 3.

REFERENCES: iii. 1, 2.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 203; R. W. Church, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 113; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 193. iii. 4.—H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 168. iii. 6.—B. Jowett, *Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 273; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 312. iii. 9.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 93.

Chap. iii., vers. 9-20.

EVERY MOUTH STOPPED.

I. Perhaps some readers are aware of a feeling of disappointment at reaching this result. Not that they doubt the native depravity of mankind, or the certainty that all men, left to themselves, will go very far astray from righteousness. But it may be said, all men were not left to themselves. God interposed with a holy and awful law. He took one race under His own moral education. He taught them carefully the way of duty, and did what was possible to fence them in it and cut off all temptation to wander out of it. Surely the average moral standard was greatly raised within that sheltered Hebrew commonwealth, and many individual Hebrews succeeded in leading very virtuous and devout lives "in all the ordinances of the law blameless"! Does it not sound hard to say that not one of them was good enough to justify his life in the sight of God? Is this not like confessing that the whole Mosaic system of religious training and moral legislation was a failure.

II. To put us in a right attitude for judging of this whole matter, it is of the first consequence to see what the purpose of God was in giving His law at all. You cannot judge whether the Mosaic law was a failure or not until you know what it was intended to accomplish. Now, the express teaching of St. Paul is that God did not expect the Jews to attain such a righteousness as would justify them at the last by their own attempts to keep the Mosaic law. A law is not intended to give life: it is only intended to regulate life. The law was not meant to lead to righteousness, because it could not give spiritual life. The law was meant to fill a far humbler office: it brought us a better knowledge of our sin. Each addition to revealed law widens men's knowledge of what is sinful, and pushes forward the frontier of the forbidden a little nearer to that ideal line which God's own nature prescribes: "Through the law cometh the knowledge of sin."

J. OSWALD DYKES, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 66.

REFERENCE: iii. 10.—J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life*, p. 1.

Chap. iii., ver. 20.—"By the law is the knowledge of sin."

I. That wrath of God against sin, to which conscience testifies, is itself merely His love, the opposition of His love to that which exalts itself against it. The fire of His love lights and cheers and warms all that abides in His love; but is a consuming fire against all that is out of and contrary to His love. And he who knows not God's wrath against sin knows not God's love. He who regards not Christ as the Judge and Avenger does not thoroughly know Him as the Saviour. Man will never be won back to God—rather, man will never be brought up to that highest perfection in which even his fall is an element, without a revelation from God which is not liable, as conscience is, to be corrupted by our tendency to sin. And how shall such a revelation be given—such an *incorruptible* revelation? We must have it, or we drop lower and lower into perdition the longer the world lasts. God made to man what has scoffingly been called a "book-revelation," a written record of His will and His acts which might not drift away with the vain imaginations and insecure traditions of men, but might remain, guarded by His providence, through the ages of the world. By the commandments and the other moral parts of the law a fixed and unalterable testimony was borne against sin.

II. But whereunto served this law? It could give us no strength, could implant no new principle in our nature, could effect for us no reconciliation with God. The more definite and precise the law was the more effective would it be for this one end, and this only—to *multiply transgressions*; that by it might be brought out into light the utter incapacity of man to please God or to rescue himself from the awful consequences of sin. The sense of sin is the first step towards recovery. Sad as it is, low as it sometimes sinks a man in loss of hope, it is the first probing of the wound by the Great Physician of the soul. "When the Spirit is come," says our Lord, "He shall convict the world of sin."

H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 84.

References: iii. 21.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 253. iii. 21-4.—W. M. Metcalfe, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 321.

Chap. iii., vers. 21-6.

Paul's Evangel.

The history of God's relations with human sin breaks into two —before Christ, and after Christ. The death of Christ, which marks the point of division, is at the same time the key to explain both.

I. Antecedently to the death of Christ the sins of men were passed over in the forbearance of God. By offering His Son for the expiation of sin, God has cut off from men the temptation to misconstrue His earlier toleration of sins, His forbearance to punish them, or His willingness to forgive them. Then, in the antecedent ages, He did pretermit sin in His forbearance; but it was only because He had purposed in His heart one day to offer for it a satisfaction such as this.

II. The same public satisfaction for sin, made by God in the face of the world, which is adequate to explain His former indulgence to past sin, is adequate to justify Him in forgiving sin now. (1) The propitiation instituted by God in His Son's sacrificial death having been made amply adequate to vindicate Divine justice, without any further exaction of penalty from sinners, Christ's death becomes our redemption. (2) Let God justify whom He will on the ground of this redemption by the expiating blood of His Son, such a justifying of the guilty must be entirely a gratuitous act on His part, undeserved, unbought by themselves, a boon of pure and sovereign grace. (3) A way of being justified which is entirely gratuitous, hanging not on man's desert but on God's grace, must be impartial and catholic. It is offered on such easy terms, because on no harder terms could helpless and condemned men receive it. Only it lies in the very nature of the case that whosoever refuses to repose his hope of acceptance with God upon the revealed basis of Christ's atonement, shuts himself out and never can be justified at all, since even God Himself knows or can compass no other method for acquitting a guilty man.

J. Oswald Dykes, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 77.

References: iii. 21-6.—E. H. Gifford, *The Glory of God in Man*, p. 30; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 15.

Chap. iii., ver. 22.—"There is no difference."

Paul here, in his grand way, triumphs and rises above all these small differences between man and man, more pure or less pure, Jew or Gentile, wise or foolish, and avers that in regard of the deepest and most important things "there is no difference." And so his gospel is a gospel for the world, because it deals with all men on the same level.

I. There is no difference between men in the fact of sin. The gospel does not assert that there is no difference in the degrees of sin. At the same time, do not let us forget that if you take the two extremes, and suppose it possible that there is a best man

in all the world and a worst man in all the world, the difference between these two is not perhaps so great as at first sight it looks. For we have to remember that motives make actions, and that you cannot judge of these by considering those, that "as a man thinketh in his heart," and not as a man does with his hands, so is he. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

II. There is no difference in the fact of God's love to us. God does not love men because of what they are, therefore He does not cease to love them because of what they are. His love to the sons of men is not drawn out by their goodness, their morality, their obedience; but it wells up from the depths of His own heart. A man can as soon pass out of the atmosphere in which he breathes as he can pass out of the love of God. "There is no difference" in the fact that all men, unthankful and evil as they are, are grasped and held in the love of God.

III. There is no difference in the purpose and power of Christ's Cross for us all. "He died for all." The area over which the purpose and power of Christ's death extends is precisely conterminous with the area over which the power of sin extends. The power of Christ's sacrifice makes possible the forgiveness of all the sins of all the world, past, present, and to come. The worth of that sacrifice, which was made by the willing surrender of the Incarnate Son of God to the death of the Cross, is sufficient for the ransom price for all the sins of all men.

IV. There is no difference in the way which we must take for salvation. The only thing that unites men to Jesus Christ is faith. You must trust Him, you must trust the power of His sacrifice, you must trust the might of His living love. Let there be no difference in our faith, or there will be a difference, deep as the difference between them that believe and them that believe not, which will darken and widen into the difference between them that are saved and them that perish.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, May 21st, 1885.

REFERENCES: iii. 22.—E. H. Gifford, *The Glory of God*, p. 1; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 373. iii. 22-6.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 83. iii. 23.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 98; J. Natt, *Posthumous Sermons*, p. 63; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 23; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 229; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 84; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 184; vol. xxxi., p. 147. iii. 23.—J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 9th series, p. 160. iii. 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii.,

No. 126. iii. 24, 25.—*Ibid.*, vol. vii., No. 373. iii. 24-8.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 282. iii. 26.—*Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 165; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 255; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 269. iii. 27.—*Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 429.

Chap. iii., ver. 28.

I. What was the point which lay at the root of St. Paul's whole argument? It was this: whether obedience to the ordinances of the Jewish law could be deemed necessary to salvation, whether it should be required of Gentile converts, whether there were anything in it which was to be held in conjunction with faith in Christ, or whether it were all done away by Christ, and declared by His Cross and Passion to be incapable of making a sinner righteous before God. This question has now for us faded in the dimness of distance; rejoicing as we do in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, we can perhaps hardly understand that such a question should be argued, much less that it should form the grand point of discussion in any age of the Church. Yet so it was in apostolic times. A very little consideration shows us why it was so, and why it was necessary for the due establishment of the Church that the question should be set at rest at once and for ever. To do this was one of the great tasks entrusted to St. Paul; himself a Jew, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a Pharisee, he nevertheless, by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, saw with a keenness of view, which seems to have been vouchsafed to no other apostle, the error and danger of allowing any word of the law, be it what it might, to be regarded as in any way co-operating with the Lord Jesus Christ for the justification of man. It is in connection with such a view of the subject that St. Paul uses the words of the text.

II. Doubtless we must all strive with our hearts and souls to keep God's law; but the real question is, in what light we are to regard all works of righteousness, all obedience to God's law, all efforts to do good, all submission of our will to His, with reference to the pardon of our sins and our entrance into eternal life? And the answer is, that we do wrong if we allow ourselves to consider for a moment how much obedience, how much doing of good, how complete an abnegation of self, will entitle us to God's favour. No amount will do this. It is only when a man realises his position as redeemed freely by the blood of Jesus Christ, as adopted into God's family for no merit of his own, that he can serve God with perfect freedom, and consider all that he can do as nothing in comparison with what

has been done by God's grace for him, and return love for love, and cry out in the spirit of adoption, "Abba, Father."

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 5th series, p. 320.

REFERENCES: iii. 28.—G. Salmon, *Sermons in Trinity College, Dublin*, pp. 206, 224; S. Leathes, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iv., p. 415; S. Martin, *Sermons*, p. 57.

Chap. iii., ver. 31; iv.

A CRUCIAL CASE.

I. It was by his faith Abraham was justified, not by his works of obedience. Paul's proof of this is very simple. He finds a remarkable proof-text ready to his hand in Gen. xv. 16. On God's side there was simply a word announcing the promises of His grace; on the man's side simply a devout and childlike reliance upon that word. God asked no more; and the man had no more to give. His mere trust in God the Promiser was held to be adequate as a ground for that sinful man's acceptance into favour, friendship, and league with the eternal Jehovah.

II. Abraham was justified by his faith, not as a circumcised man, but as an uncircumcised. It lies in the very idea of acceptance through faith, that wherever faith is present there God will accept the sinner apart from every other circumstance, such as nationality, or an external rite, or Church privilege, or the like. If faith saves a man, then faith must save every man who has it. Abraham was a justified man as soon as he was a believer, not as soon as he was circumcised. And the design of such an arrangement was to make him the true type and spiritual progenitor of all believers. The only people whom his experience fails to embrace are those Jews who are circumcised but not believing, who trust in their lineage and in their covenant badge and their keeping of the law, expecting to be saved for their meritorious observance of prescribed rules, but who in the free and gracious promises of Abraham's God put no trust at all.

III. It turns out now that, instead of St. Paul being an apostate or disloyal Jew for admitting believing Gentiles to an equal place in the favour of Israel's God, it is his self-righteous countryman, who monopolises Divine grace, and will have no Gentile to be saved unless he has first become a circumcised observer of Moses' law, that is really false to the original idea of the Abrahamic covenant. All who have faith, whatever their

race, are blessed with faithful Abraham; and he, says Paul, writing to a Gentile Church, is the father of us all.

J. Oswald Dykes, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 99.

References: iii. 31.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 25. iii.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. iii., p. 215. iv. 1-9.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 249. iv. 3.—J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 121. iv. 6-9.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 248. iv. 7.—*Ibid.*, p. 248. iv. 9.—*Ibid.*, p. 258. iv. 9-11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 10.

Chap. iv., ver. 11.—"The father of all them that believe."

The Call of Abraham.

Mark some characteristics of the faith of Abraham.

I. It is the faith not which conceives great things and works for them, but which places itself as an instrument in God's hands and lets Him work through it. It is the faith of martyrs, of men who have not seen that they were doing anything heroic, anything that would change the course of history, only that they were doing their duty, doing it as they could not choose but do. The greatest movers of mankind have felt and delighted to feel that they were being used; that they spoke and acted because they must; that they were working out another's purpose—a purpose larger than their own.

II. It was the faith which was specially suited to him who was to be the father of the chosen people—the father in a yet larger sense of all that believe. It was the faith which could wait through long generations, clinging still to the promise, though so dimly understood, of great blessing for the race, and through it for mankind, content in the meantime to suffer if it must be, to wander in the wilderness, to be as a little flock among wolves, to be trampled down, carried into captivity, the faith growing ever brighter in times of darkest calamity, and more assured, more spiritual. It was the faith which could receive God's gradual revelation of Himself and of His purposes; the open ear which in each age would meet God's voice as Samuel met it—"Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth"; for ever learning, seeing one interpretation after another of ancient prophecies fail and pass away, yet waiting, listening, receiving, till the full satisfaction came, till the consolation of Israel dawned on it. Remember that the call of Abraham was the beginning of true religion in the world—of religion with a hope, a progress. Every new book of the Bible marks an onward movement.

III. This faith of Abraham—the faith which acts upon a

trusted voice, which does not need to see its way even with the eye of imagination, which takes God at His word and waits His time—is the faith which is not beyond our imitation, and which, if we will, may be the hope and stay of our own lives.

E. C. WICKHAM, *Wellington College Sermons*, p. 15.

REFERENCES: iv. 13.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 84. iv. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1347; *Homilist*, new series, vol. iii., p. 177; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 338. iv. 17.—Fraser, *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 105. iv. 18, 19.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ix., pp. 215, 392. iv. 19-21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 733. iv. 19-22.—W. Hubbard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 26. iv. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1367; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 79; R. S. Candlish, *Sermons*, p. 105.

Chap. iv., vers. 20, 21.—"**He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform.**"

RELIGIOUS faith Rational.

To hear some men speak (I mean men who scoff at religion), it might be thought we never acted on faith and trust except in religious matters, whereas we are acting on trust every hour of our lives. When faith is said to be a religious principle it is the things believed, not the act of believing them, which is peculiar to religion.

I. It is obvious that we trust to our *memory*. We do not now witness what we saw yesterday, yet we have no doubt it took place in the way we *remember*. Again, when we use reasoning, and are convinced of anything by reasoning, what is it but that we trust the general soundness of our reasoning powers? And observe that we continually trust our memories and our reasoning powers in this way, *though they often deceive us*. This is worth observing, because it is sometimes said that we cannot be certain that our faith in religion is not a mistake. In all practical matters we are obliged to dwell upon not what *may be possibly*, but what is *likely* to be. When we come to examine the subject, it will be found that, strictly speaking, we know little more than that we exist, and that there is an unseen power whom we are bound to obey. Beyond this we must trust; and first our senses, memory, and reasoning powers; then other authorities; so that, in fact, almost all we do every day of our lives is on trust, *i.e.*, *faith*.

II. It is easy to show that, even considering faith in the sense of *reliance on the words of another*, it is no irrational or strange principle of conduct in the concerns of this life. For when we

consider the subject attentively, how few things there are which we can ascertain for ourselves by our own senses and reason! After all, what *do* we know without trusting others? The world could not go on without trust. Distrust, *want of faith*, breaks the very bonds of human society. Now then, shall we account it only rational for a man, when he is ignorant, to believe his fellow-man, nay, to yield to another's judgment as better than his own, and yet think it *against* reason when one, like Abraham, gives ear to the word of God, and sets the promise of God above his own short-sighted expectation? If we but obey God strictly, in time faith will become like sight: we shall have no more difficulty in finding what will please God than in moving our limbs, or in understanding the conversation of our familiar friends. This is the blessedness of confirmed obedience.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. i., p. 190.

REFERENCES: iv. 21.—Silver, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 397. iv. 22.—J. Irons, *Ibid.*, vol. xi., p. 161. iv. 23-5.—W Hubbard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 42.

Chap. iv., ver. 25.—"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

CHRIST Risen our Justification.

I. These two gifts of our Lord, Atonement and Justification, are laid down by St. Paul distinctly as the fruits of His death and His resurrection. "Who was delivered for our offences," to atone for them; "was raised again for our justification," to justify us. What Christ purchased for us by His death He giveth us through His life. It is our living Lord who imparts to us the fruits of His own death. He hath the keys of death and hell by virtue of His life from death. As truly, then, as the death of Christ was the true remission of our sins, though not yet imparted to us, so truly was His resurrection our true justification, imparting to us the efficacy of His death and justifying us, or making us righteous in the sight of God.

II. The joy and gift of our Easter festival is our risen Lord Himself. To the Church it is yearly true, "The Lord hath risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Before, all was laid up for us, but we had it not. By the resurrection is the gift of the Spirit and engrafting into Him; by it is forgiveness of sin, and removal of punishment, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, and adoption as sons and brotherhood with Christ, yea, oneness with Him, and eternal inheritance, because

all these are in Him, and by it we become partakers of Him and of all which is His. Yea, this is the bliss of our festivals, that they not only shadow out a likeness and conformity between the Head and the members, our Redeemer and us on whom His name is called, but there is through the power of His Cross and resurrection a real inworked conformity, a substance and reality. "Whatever," says St. Augustine, "was wrought in the Cross of Christ, in His burial, in His resurrection on the third day, in His ascension into heaven and sitting down at the right hand of the Father, was so wrought, that by these actions, not words only, of mystical meaning, should be figured out the Christian life enacted here below. We have been made partakers of His precious death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, for where He is, there are we, in pledge and earnest, if we be His; thence He looks down upon us, fixing our failing eyes to look up to Him; thence, by the secret sympathy between the Head and the members, He draws us upward with longing to be like Him: the firstfruits of our spirit are already there; and He is with us, raising what yet lingereth here; we are with Him there, since, if we be His, we are in Him; He is with us here, for by His Spirit He dwelleth in us, if we love Him."

E. B. PUSEY, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 214.

Chap. iv., ver. 25.—"Who was delivered for our offences."

THESE words are the answer to the question which would naturally arise from the perusal of the history of the death and passion of Jesus Christ. "He was delivered on account of our offences." Men's sins were the cause of the sufferings and death of the sinless Son of God.

I. We read the history of those awful hours during which was transacted the mighty work of a world's redemption, and we are moved with indignation against the various actors in the melancholy scene. But, after all, and without at all extenuating their guilt, these were not the real crucifiers of the Lord of life, or, if they were, it was but as instruments, free indeed, and therefore responsible instruments, but only instruments by whom a death was inflicted, whose cause lay far deeper than their malice or their fears. Without this course the rage of His enemies would have been impotent against the Son of God. For each one of us, for our own individual sins, that sacrifice was offered on the cross. Our waywardness, our rebellion, our acts of injustice, or dishonesty, our false, profane, angry, and slanderous words, these were the crucifiers of the Son of God.

II. If our sins were the cause of Christ's suffering, the emotions which should be awakened in our breast should surely be: (1) A fear of sin. With the awful and mysterious declaration of the text before our eyes, what possible hope of escape can we have if we continue in sin? (2) Another habitual feeling which the great truth of the text should leave in our hearts is a hatred for sin. Many reasons have we, indeed, to hate sin, for it is the degradation of our race, the cause of all our sufferings, and the peril of our everlasting future; and the more we are taught by God's Spirit to see the beauty of holiness, and to love the just and the pure and the true, the more we shall hate sin for its own sake, its moral deformity, and its enmity to God and to good. (3) But while fear and hatred of sin should accompany a belief in the atonement, the truth should be embraced by a trusting and cheerful faith. The mysterious greatness of the sacrifice offered when Christ suffered magnifies the Divine justice and the guilt of sin. It also demonstrates the infinitude of God's mercy. (4) The atonement thus embraced by faith should be the root and spring of a loving obedience. The highest conceivable instance of God's love, it should enkindle in our hearts the love of God.

BISHOP JACKSON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 354.

I. How was it possible to make men feel that they are something quite different from brute beasts, that they were not animals, clever and more cunning than all other animals, that might is not right, self-control not a folly? Or how is it possible to prove that man is not a mere perishing animal that dies, and then there is an end of him? The world of Greece and Rome had come to the blank conclusion that there was no hope, no life worth living. There are plenty of people living now who have inherited instincts from centuries of Christian forefathers, and who are still influenced by Christian customs and traditions, and thus go on as they have been used to do, but who live in blank hopelessness as to the future. How shall it be possible to prove to them now that in every soul of man is the imperishableness of the Divine? Philosophy cannot do it—it is simply silent. Science cannot do it—it is outside her province. Read the philosophies of the would-be philosophers, and you will despair, as centuries ago men despaired. They do not touch the greater hope. And so there sets in the struggle of the day between all the now long-inherited Christian instincts of the race, all the unsuppressed divinely given instincts of the

man, against the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

II. In this struggle we need a reinforcement of power. It is to be found in the truths of which Good Friday and Easter are the witnesses. Christ died that there might be no part of our experience peculiar to ourselves, that He might show that He was very man. He rose to show that death was not the end of all things; and He went into heaven that He might show by His visible rising what will in some form happen also to us. And all for this reason, and to teach us for ever that the interval is bridged over completely from man to God. This vast interval He traversed twice: He came down from God to man, He went up from man to God. He was Himself and is Himself, God and man. The chain is complete from heaven to earth. Since Christ came man knows that he is not a mere animal—he is by his affinities Divine. He walks the earth a new creature. See, says the history of Jesus Christ, the chain is already complete that connects man with God. If the chain reaches down till its lower end is lost in molecular forces, it reaches up till its upper end is lost in the glory of the throne of God, and in the Divine person of Jesus Christ, who has shown us the perfection of God.

J. M. WILSON, *Sermons in Clifton College Chapel*, p. 155.

REFERENCES: iv. 25.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, new series, vol. ii., p. 213; Bishop Moorhouse, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 108.

Chap. v., ver. 1.—"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1. WE read in the New Testament, and especially in the writings of St. Paul, a good deal of the doctrine of justification by faith. Now, is there any distinction between this doctrine of justification, between this blessing of justification, and the blessing of pardon? Is pardon synonymous with justification? I take it that, while justification always involves pardon, and while in the case of an individual sinner it is never separated from pardon, and the pardoned man is always justified, and the justified man is always pardoned,—while in the processes of God's grace to an individual soul, these are never found apart, yet theologically they are to be carefully distinguished. The type and symbol of a justified man is not Joshua simply washed, but Joshua clothed, and clothed in such garments, so fair in holiness, so perfect in their beauty, that we may put into his mouth the song in which

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the Church, under God's mercy, breaks out into the jubilant language of thanksgiving and praise, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath clothed me with garments of salvation."

II. "Peace with God." It is undeniable that there is such a thing as peace which does not arise from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is: (1) The peace of ignorance. There are men who know nothing of the law of God; they know nothing of the nature of God; they have never been roused to spiritual anxiety or to spiritual inquiry. Their hopes are of the vaguest and dreamiest kind; or they are simply those hopes of which we hear much in the present day, resting upon the great mercy of God, as if somehow or other we are all to get back to God at last—whether we die in Christ or not. (2) And then there is the peace of the Pharisee. He lives and dies in the buckram of his self-righteousness. He thanks God that he is not as other men are. He is going to heaven perfectly satisfied with himself, or perhaps, just trusting a little to Christ to make up the balance which he may think is against him. Therefore we should ask, not only, "Have you peace?" but "Upon what is that peace resting?"

J. C. MILLER, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 717, new series.

I. THE common meaning which is put upon the word *justified* may not be all that St. Paul intended by it, nor all that we need to see in it. But it must have a great worth. God accounts me righteous, He justifies me, He does not account me that which in my proper legitimate state, as united to Christ, I am not; He treats me as that which, in this my proper and reasonable state, I am. The justified man is not *only* one who is acquitted, not *only* one who is set down as righteous, but one who, in the strictest sense, has become, or has been made, righteous.

II. And thus we are able to feel the force of the next words, "Being justified by *faith*." God is the Justifier, He who accounts man righteous and makes him righteous, and man is justified or made righteous by faith. He believes the witness which God has given of Himself in His Son, and therefore he has faith in God, faith in what He has done, faith in what He is. He is righteous only by this faith, for only by it does he claim any relation to Him who is righteous, only by it can he ascend out of his own nature. Having faith in God, he becomes a true man; otherwise he possesses only the torments of a man with the instincts and pleasures of an animal.

III. Being justified by faith, we have *peace*. Peace must come by rising into life. To suppose that this peace is something won by a certain momentary act of belief, and thenceforth guaranteed to the believer as his treasure and property, is to subvert the whole doctrine.

IV. The great question which every man asks is, How can I be at peace with God? The answer St. Paul makes is, "God has made peace with thee, through Jesus Christ." In Him He has manifested to thee what He is; in Him He sees thee. Thou mayest see God in Him; thou mayest rise thyself to be a new creature in Him. For thou art not what thou supposest thyself to be—a separate atom in the universe, a creature who has no relation to any other. Thou hast wonderful affinities with all these beings about thee; and when thou art driven by thy wretchedness and despair of thyself to trust in Him who has taken thy nature upon Him, thou wilt find out that secret as well as the secret of thy own emancipation.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 1.

REFERENCES: v. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 510; vol. xxv., No. 1456; *Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ix., p. 215; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 83; *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 123; E. Johnson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 234; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 235; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 376; W. Hay Aitken, *Around the Cross*, p. 65; Archbishop Magee, *Sermons at Bath*, pp. 63, 88.

Chap. v., vers. 1, 2.—"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

THE State of Grace.

There are some who seem only to fear or to have very little joy in religion. These are in a more hopeful state than those who only joy and do not fear at all; yet they are not altogether in a right state. Let us consider how the persons in question come to have this defective kind of religion.

I. In the first place, of course, we must take into account bodily disorder, which is not unfrequently the cause of this perplexity of mind. Many persons have an anxious self-tormenting disposition, or depression of spirits, or deadness of the affections, in consequence of continued or peculiar ill-health; and though it is their study, as it is their duty, to strive against this evil as much as they can, yet it often may be impossible to be rid of it. Of course in such cases we can impute no fault to them. They must be patient under their fears, and try and serve God more strictly.

II. But again, the uncomfortable state of mind I have described sometimes, it is to be feared, arises, I will not say from wilful sin, but from some natural deficiency which might be corrected, but is not. The sins I speak of arise partly through frailty, partly through want of love; and they seem just to have this effect of dimming or quenching our peace and joy. The absence of a vigilant walk, of exact conscientiousness in all things, of an earnest and vigorous warfare against our spiritual enemies, in a word, of strictness, this is what obscures our peace and joy.

III. This fearful anxious state of mind arises very commonly from not having a lively sense of our present privileges. There are persons highly respectable indeed and serious, but whose religion is of a dry and cold character, with little heart or insight into the next world. They are most excellent men in their line, but they do not walk in a lofty path. There is nothing unearthly about them; they cannot be said to be worldly; yet they do not walk by things unseen, they do not discern and contemplate the next world. They are not on the alert to detect, patient in watching, keen-sighted in tracing the movements of God's secret providence. They do not feel they are in an immense unbounded system, with a height above and a depth beneath. Such men are used to explain away such passages as the text. Their joy does not rise higher than what they call a rational faith and hope, a satisfaction in religion, a cheerfulness, a well-ordered mind, and the like—all very good words, if properly used, but shallow to express the fulness of the gospel privileges.

IV. What is it, then, that these little ones of Christ lack who, without wilful sin, past or present, on their consciences, are in gloom and sorrow? What but the great and high doctrines connected with the Church? Fall down in astonishment at the glories which are around thee and in thee, poured to and fro in such a wonderful way that thou art, as it were, dissolved into the kingdom of God, as though thou hadst nought to do but to contemplate and feed on that great vision. In spite of all recollections of the past or fear for the future, we have a present source of rejoicing. Whatever comes, weal or woe, however stands our account as yet in the books against the Last Day, this we have and this we may glory in—the present power and grace of God in us and over us, and the means thereby given us of victory in the end.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 138.

REFERENCE: v. 1, 2.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. iv., p. 413.

Chap. v., vers. 1-11.

Immediate Results of Justification.

To be acquitted of guilt through the death of Jesus is the most elementary blessing which the gospel brings to our condemned race, shut up in its prison-house of wrath. But it cannot come alone. It opens a door of hope through which each reconciled sinner may look forward unto a new world of lovely blessings following in its train. Hope is the key-word of this section, therefore—exultant hope of future glory; and the three ideas which successively emerge in its very rich and vivid sentences are these: (1) Our hope reposes on this new relation, established between us and God, that we are at peace with Him. (2) Our hope is not impaired but confirmed by our present tribulation. (3) Our hope is warranted by the proof which we already possess of the love of God for us.

I. There is room now in men's hearts for the hope that God will bless them with that glory which is His own blessedness, since now they are at peace with Him (vers. 1, 2). Enemies of God could never expect to behold His glory, or be satisfied with His likeness. His friends may. Standing thus near, within sight of that Eye that kindles with a Divine delight over His banished brought back; standing thus near, introduced by the Hand that was pierced, and accepted in the Beloved who was slain, what is there for a justified believer to fear? What is there not for him to hope?

II. It is far off, that glory of God which we hope for; at least, it is still in the future. The present is for all of us a life of trouble. Our mean, grieved, dying days, do they not flout and mock at such splendid expectations? Quite the contrary. In the long run life's trouble is found rather to confirm our hope. The Christian who perseveres under trouble is an approved or accredited believer. Is it not clear that, when the tested Christian finds his faith has proved itself genuine, his hope will wax so much the more confident?

III. The triumphant hope of a justified believer in what God is yet to do for him finds a still more sure and inexpugnable foundation of fact in what God has already done to prove the greatness of His love.

J. Oswald Dykes, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 113.

References: v. 1-12.—*Expository Sermons on the New Testament*, p. 178. v 5.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 97; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 829; vol. xxxii., No. 1904; T. T. Carter, *Sermons*, p. 309; E. H. Gifford, *The Glory of God in Man*, p. 90. v. 6.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 1. v. 6-8.—H. W. Beecher,

Christian World Pulpit, vol. iv., p. 424; W. Hubbard, *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 339; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 446; vol. xx., No. 1184; vol. xx., No. 1191; vol. xxiii., No. 1345. v. 6-10.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 340; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 16; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 265.

Chap. v., vers. 7, 8.

God's Love Magnified in Christ's Death.

I. In considering how God appointed our Lord and Saviour to suffering and death as the most perfect proof of obedience, it seems necessary to begin by removing a difficulty which will certainly occur to every one: that is, that the death of the Saviour seems by no means so obvious an evidence of the love of God, His and our heavenly Father, as of the Saviour's own love to His brethren; and that it is only, as it were, on the ground of His love to us that we have any right to see in His death the love of God towards us. And yet the case stands as I have stated it. It is indeed difficult to separate things which are in the very closest connection; and who could wish to make a division between the Saviour's love to us and His obedience to His and our heavenly Father? And yet the two are so related that His love to us is shown most directly in His life and His obedience to His Father in His sufferings and death. God shows forth His love to us in this, says Paul, that according to His command and will Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; not for the sake of the righteous, not for a good man nor for a circle of friends, but for the whole world of sinners. And so we cannot doubt that this was the most perfect act of obedience, and that God called Christ to it for our sakes; for it was necessary that He should endure this death, not for His own sake nor with any other good object but that of effecting the salvation of sinners.

II. This brings us to consider, in the second place, what was meant to be accomplished, and therefore *was* accomplished—for when we speak of a Divine purpose we cannot separate design from fulfilment—by this death of the Saviour, that we may see how it was the full glorification of the Divine love. The greatest love is that which effects the most good to the person who is the object of it. We should try in vain to give another definition of it. Now, the Apostle says, "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of the One the many are made righteous." This then is what was to result from the Saviour's obedience unto death on the cross. He needed to die for us, Paul says, when we were

yet sinners. We become righteous, only it is not because and so far as we have set Him before our eyes as an ideal, for thus we shall never reach it, but really because and in so far as we have received Him into our hearts as the fountain of life. We become righteous if we no longer live in the flesh, but Christ the Son of God lives in us—if we are fully identified with that common life of which He is the centre. For then each of us can say of himself, "Who is there that can condemn?" It is Christ that justifies. We are in Him, He is in us, inseparably united with those who believe on the Son of God; in this fellowship with Him we are truly righteous. But if we come back to ourselves and consider our individual life just in itself, then we are glad to forget what is behind and to reach forth towards that which is before. Then we know well that we must ever anew take refuge in Him, ever be looking to Him and to His obedience on the cross, ever be filled with the power of His life and His presence, and thus we shall attain to that growth in righteousness and holiness and wisdom, in which truly consists our redemption through Him, through His life and His love, His obedience and His death.

F. SCHLEIERMACHER, *Selected Sermons*, p. 372.

REFERENCES: v. 7, 8.—E. D. SOLOMON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 280; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 7.

Chap. v., ver. 8.—"God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

WHAT Proves God's Love?

I. It is a strange thing that the love of God needs to be either proved or pressed upon men. (1) There never was, there is not, any religion untouched by Christianity that has any firm grip of the truth "God is love." (2) Even among ourselves and other people that have drunk in some form of Christianity with their mother's milk, it is the hardest possible thing even for men who do accept that gospel in their hearts to keep themselves up to the level of that great truth.

II. Notice the one fact which performs the double office of demonstrating and commending to us the love of God: "In that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Christ's death is a death, not for an age, but for all time; not for this, that, or the other man, not for a section of the race, but for the whole of us, in all generations. The power of that death, as the sweep of that love, extends over all humanity, and holds forth benefits to every man of woman born.

III. Look at the force of this proof. Has it ever struck you that the words of the text, upon every hypothesis but one, are a most singular paradox? "God commendeth *His own* love to us, in that Christ died for us." Is that not strange? What is the connection between God's love and Christ's death? Is it not obvious that we must conceive the relation between God and Christ to be singularly close in order that Christ's death should prove God's love? The man who said that God's love was proved by Christ's propitiatory death believed that the heart of Christ was the revelation of the heart of God, and that what Christ did God did in His well-beloved Son.

IV. Consider what is thus proved and pressed upon us by the Cross. (1) The Cross of Jesus Christ speaks to the world of a love which is not drawn forth by any merit or goodness in us. (2) The Cross of Christ preaches to us a love that has no cause, motive, reason, or origin, except Himself. (3) The Cross preaches to us a love which shrinks from no sacrifice. (4) The Cross proves to us and presses upon us a love which wants nothing but our love, which hungers for the return of our love and our thankfulness.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, June 4th, 1885.

SUFFERING LOVE.

I. This verse is a direct assertion of the deity of Jesus Christ. For it does not mean, "The Father commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," but that "Christ commends His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, *He* died for us." It is plain that He who loves is He who dies—otherwise there is no argument at all, if one loves and another dies.

II. When it was God's will to present to our world a perfect view of His adorable Being He embodied it into flesh. He made it palpable to man's understanding. He made it speak by tears and smiles and humility and sympathy and anguish; and then He hung it upon a cross, and that image of God's love He called Christ. All that is truth in this world is a copy of the highest, and the greatest original of all love was suffering love, and therefore none can be a picture of love except it bear something of sadness.

III. The language of the Apostle at once conducts us to one leading trait in the love which characterised the sufferings of Jesus Christ—for it was not reflecting love, but originating love. It went forth to sinners. We must take care that we

understand the full force of the expression. The love that is in the life and death of Jesus is the seed of every spark of love that is worthy the name of love upon the whole earth.

IV. One marvel of the love of Christ is its simple endurance of things conspiring to disturb it. He passed through every diversity of irritating circumstance, and yet there is not a moment in which we can discover a want of affection. He pursues His path of high love without one single deviation.

V. We cannot admire too much the beautiful proportion of the love of Christ—blending the general interest with particular tenderness. He grasped the universal kingdom of God. Nevertheless, His heart was so disengaged for any one that wanted it, that He loved and bled as if for that one. He has a look for Peter in the hall. He has an eye for Mary upon the cross. He could descend at once from the grand rangings of His comprehensive work to the minutest incident and the smallest work that comes nearest Him. He recollects the cock must crow twice. He has compassion upon the poor servant's wounded ear. He studies the comfort of His mother's future home. These are beautiful traits in the face of love; and is it not just such love that we want?

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 107.

GOD'S Inexhaustible Love.

I. We often forget that God is our Father when sorrow overwhelms us. We forget it still more when all is prosperous and happy. Nay, it would be truer to say that in sorrow we are not tempted to forget this truth, but to deny it; in happiness we are tempted to forget it. There is indeed such a thing as an innocent forgetting. Just as a child may forget the presence of a loved earthly father because that father is so completely a part of the happiness which is shed around, so, too, the Christian may go on his way rejoicing in what God has bestowed—health and strength and happy thoughts and enjoyments suited to youth—and certainly will not be blamed for letting his thoughts be full of the innocent pleasures that his Father gives. But this forgetfulness of God, which may be innocent in the beginning, is liable to slip into a coldness of love simply by its own continuance.

II. We are tempted to forget, or to disbelieve, or even to deny that God is our Father when we have done wrong. And, indeed, there is a kind of truth in what we feel; for we rightly feel that our wrong-doing has taken us away from Him. We

feel cast off; out of His sight; we feel as if it were useless now to try to hold a place in His love, that place which our misdeed has forfeited; too often we add sin to sin in a kind of recklessness, because it seems not worth while to battle for a completely lost cause. But this is a temptation of our weak nature, and not the direction of conscience nor the teaching of the Bible. If we feel cold in heart, let us turn to Him for warmth; if we feel doubtful, let us beg Him to increase our faith; if we have done very wickedly, let us be all the more sorrowful and all the more earnest in our endeavours to cast out the evil spirit. But let us never forget that He is our Father, and that without our prayer, out of the depths of His love, He sent His Son to bring us back to His Home, to Himself.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, p. 326.

REFERENCES: v. 8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 104; vol. xxiii., No. 1345; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 182; C. G. Finney, *Gospel Themes*, p. 307; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 107; J. Edmunds, *Sermons in a Village Church*, p. 96. v. 10.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. iii., p. 422; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 9th series, p. 181.

Chap. v., ver. 12.—"By one man sin entered into the world."

PERHAPS there is no more awful thought than this, that sin is all around us and within us, and we know not what it is. We are beset by it on every side: it hangs over us, hovers about us, casts itself across our path, hides itself where our next footstep is to fall, searches us through and through, listens at our heart, floats through all our thoughts, draws our will under its sway and ourselves under its dominion, and we do not know what it is.

I. The entering in of sin proves the presence of an evil being. We talk of powers and qualities and principles and oppositions and the like; but we are only putting words for realities. They do not exist apart from being create or uncreate; they are the attributes and energies of living spirits. Sin entered in through and by the evil one—that is, the devil.

II. Another truth to be learned is this, that by the entering in of sin a change passed upon the world itself. I am not now speaking of physical evil, such as dissolution and death and the wasting away of God's works, but only of moral evil. A change passed upon the condition of man. His will revolted and transferred its loyalty from God to the evil one. Thenceforward man was the representative of the alien and antagonist power which had broken the unity of God's kingdom; and his will was bent in a direct opposition to the will of God. Such, then, is sin.

III. This awful principle of sin has been ever multiplying

itself from the beginning of the world. It so clave to the life of man that, as living souls were multiplied, sin in them was multiplied also. As sin has multiplied in its extent, so it would seem also to have become more intense in its character. The mystery of original sin is begun over and over again with each successive generation. Men grow up to a certain height of the moral stature, and are cut down and laid in the earth; their children rise up more or less to the same standard, within certain limits which are the conditions of our being and our probation. But it is no less true that there is a growth and accumulation of evil which in the life of the world is analogous to the deterioration of character in the individual man. The full unfolding of sin has ever been at the close of the dispensations of God; it has been at its worst when He was nighest. It shall at last stand forth in the earth, at the full stature of its hate and daring against heaven, and by the coming of the Son of man in glory shall be cast out for ever.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 1.

I. NOTE first how naturally and reasonably faith may link the mysterious record of the Fall with the plain facts of our present state. There is a clear and familiar analogy between the childhood of each one of us and the childhood of the race. It is from others that we learn the story of our earliest days; we trust others for all knowledge of the time of our birth and the first shelter of our life; others tell us to whom we owed the care and love in which self-knowledge woke; we must ask others how our place and lot were first marked out for us among our fellow-men. It is faith in others, the evidence of things not seen, which links our present and our past, which gives us the bare outline of our infancy, and shows us our own life continuous beyond the bounds of memory. Now, is it not exactly thus with the childhood of mankind? Natural reason tells us as little of the childhood of humanity as memory can tell us of our own. All the wondrous vision of man's infancy God offers to our faith. He bids us trust Him here. The facts of life force our thoughts to the recognition of the Fall, just as the attractions and repulsions of the heavenly bodies guide the astronomer to believe in the existence of an undiscovered star. "All hangs on that imperceptible point." And so, I believe, it has come to pass that the doctrine of the Fall, and of a flaw and fault inherent in our manhood, has been at once the most scornfully rejected and the most generally acknowledged truth in all the Christian faith.

II. Over against the great fact of the sin of the world there stands the great fact of the sinlessness of Christ. We realise the full import of one side of the contrast only as we enter into the reality of the other. Only in the light of His holiness can we see how far the world has fallen away from God; only as we represent to ourselves the range and subtlety and cruelty of sin can we recognise the arresting and controlling miracle of His perfect holiness. And as we realise what He, All-perfect and All-love, vouchsafed to bear for us within the misery of our loveless life, it will lead us to kneel with a new glow of gratitude and adoration at His feet, to cry with a new longing that we may never fall away from Him, fall back under the darkness of sin. "O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. For Thou only art Holy, Thou only art the Lord; Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father."

F. PAGET, *Cambridge Review*, March 3rd, 1886.

REFERENCES: vi. 12.—C. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, p. 228; C. J. Vaughan, *Lessons of the Cross and Passion*, p. 214; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vii., p. 149; W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 72; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 157. v. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1591; E. de Pressensé, *The Mystery of Suffering*, p. 1; E. Bersier, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. i., pp. 13, 94, 160.

Chap. v., vers. 17-21.

THE Chapter of the Five Kings.

Where do we find these five kings? There is King Sin, for Sin reigned. There is King Death, for I read "Death reigned." There is King Grace, for Grace reigned. There is King Jesus, for we reign by One, Jesus Christ; and then, as a consequence, you have kingly saints, for "they which receive abundance of grace shall reign."

I. King Sin. His laws are the lusts of man's own heart. One of the saddest things about him is that we can say all his subjects are voluntarily so. They are willingly captives. He does not hold them with a grip against their wish. His reign is a cruel one, for he reigns "unto death."

II. King Death. Death reigns by sin. Satan reigns by both. It is a triple empire. They stand or fall together. Who can compete with Death? He can say what no monarch on earth can utter. I have never suffered a defeat. I have entered into the lists with the wisest and the strongest and have overcome them. The wealthy have not been able to bribe me, and the longest life has had to succumb at last.

III. King Grace—King Jesus. By His teaching and by His life, by His death and by His resurrection, Jesus opposed Sin.

IV. Kingly saints. How little the world understands the Church! The world cannot see our royal robes, for they are made of such peculiar texture that you must have a sanctified eye to behold them. The world cannot see the crown that is on every believer's brow. Only the saint can perceive it on the brow of his brother. In a little while King Jesus shall come again, and then shall be caught up to Him all His saints, and the text shall be literally and perfectly fulfilled, and we shall reign with Him. There are thrones waiting for the redeemed. There are unfading crowns awaiting the Divine bestowal. "They shall reign by One, Jesus Christ."

A. G. BROWN, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1108, new series.

REFERENCES: v. 18.—W. J. Woods, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 198; *Homilist*, new series, vol. iii., p. 90. v. 19.—E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 144. v. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 37; *Homilist*, new series, vol. ii., p. 260; vol. iii., p. 90; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 373.

Chap. v., vers. 20, 21.

ABOUNDING Sin; Over-abounding Grace.

I. Grace. Here are the two antagonists—grace and sin. Both would be kings; one only has the power to reign. Grace is not just synonymous with love, though love is at the heart of it. It is love in a certain relation—the love of a Redeemer working to its ends. It represents the whole sum of the forces and influences by which the love that would redeem aims at the accomplishment of its hope. Ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus, but the measure of it One only knows. That grace is the conqueror of sin. That triumphs where law fails.

II. The relation between grace and sin. (1) Sin is the condition of its manifestation. No sin, no grace, and none of that special glory which grace alone can win—the glory of the redemption of the world. God suffers sin to be born because He knows that grace can conquer it, strip its spoils, and reign in triumph over worlds which His victory has glorified eternally. (2) There is a glory which no feat of omnipotence even can create, which grace, by the conquest of sin, can win and wear through eternity. No sin, no grace, and in the highest sense no glory.

III. The relation between grace and righteousness. Grace must reign through righteousness, if it reign at all. (1) None

but a righteous soul can be a blessed soul. (2) The righteousness which is by grace has a glory and blessedness which is all its own.

IV. The complete and final end of God "unto eternal life." Death is simply isolation. Life is the opposite of isolation. It is the faculty of communion with all things—receiving their tributes, and repaying them with fruits. The work of grace is as the baptism of a new life for man. The eye kindles again when it feels the inspiration, the blood glows, the limbs and organs of the spirit brace themselves to new vigour and swiftness, while a solemn joy fills the heart which is unspeakable and full of glory.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Divine Mysteries*, p. 81.

REFERENCES: v. 20, 21.—S. A. Tipple, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 104. v. 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 330; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 56; C. J. Vaughan, *Lessons of the Cross and Passion*, p. 201. vi. 1, 2.—F. W. Farrar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 385.

Chap. vi., vers. 1-5.

FREE Grace and Sin.

In this passage, under cover of a reply to a plausible objection to the doctrine of justification, we really enter upon the discussion of the bearing of gospel faith on moral character.

I. To the objection, the plausible but hateful objection, "What then? Are we to persist in our sin just in order that (as you say) the grace of God may abound in its forgiveness?" St. Paul's reply is a very blunt and staggering one. It amounts to this: such an abuse of free grace is in the nature of things impossible. It is practically unthinkable and out of the question. "For," says he, "persons who like us died to sin—how shall we any longer live in it?" Christians, then, are people who in the mere fact of becoming Christians died to sin; severed their old connection with it, that is, or passed through an experience which put a virtual end to their sinful life. This is what faith in Christ has done for everybody who has ever really believed in Him. After an experience like that it is, by the laws of human nature, impossible—if it were possible, it would be morally shameful—for the man any longer to live wilfully in his old sins.

II. One thing is sufficiently manifest. Christian faith is very far from a superficial or inoperative or merely intellectual act, such as a man can do without his moral character being affected

by it. It is very much the opposite of that. It is connected with the deep roots of our moral and religious nature. It launches us on a totally fresh stream of vital influences. It is like a death and a birth in one; like a burial and a resurrection. Those who have been baptized into Christ and say they trust in His death as the ground of their peace with God are bound to satisfy themselves that their faith is of a sort to kill sin.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 143.

REFERENCES: vi. 2.—J. Natt, *Posthumous Sermons*, p. 90. vi. 2-8.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 253. vi. 3.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 55. vi. 3, 4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1627; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 15. vi. 3-5.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 247. vi. 3-8.—Bishop Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 129.

Chap. vi., ver. 4.—"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death."

EASTER Even.

I. We know what an impression is made by the sight of a dead body, especially if it is that of one who has been near and dear to us. And every one who has felt this lesson has been for a time, for the moment it may be, or hour, or day, if not longer, a different man. The world has lost its power either to distress or please him, and appears in its true colours; and he sees what sin is before God. Yes; the one great truth of all truths is to know what sin is before God. Now this is the wisdom of the grave, yet of itself it is but a cold and lifeless wisdom; but combined with the death and burial of Christ, and the contemplation of it, this wisdom is quickened by love: love is able to overcome the power of death, not by avoiding it, but by wrestling with it.

II. There was an old heathen philosophy that taught deadness to the world: the thorough laying aside it required of all human feeling and passions; but what it inculcated partook of that awful and dead calm which nature itself derives from the grave of man; it had nothing of that peace which the Christian learns by the tomb of Christ, wherein there is release from sin by dying with His death, and in those fruits of righteousness wherein God still works, while He gives rest. Thus Christ, being dead, yet speaketh, while by His Spirit He quickeneth our mortal bodies. The world invites us to live to it; philosophy bids us to be dead to the world; but Christianity adds, in order that we may live to God, we are not only to be dead with Christ, but to learn of Him and live with Him, if we would find His rest for the soul.

III. Though the Christian be dead to the world, and so really unharmed by it, yet the world will not be dead towards him. Though unwilling, it bears testimony; and from a kind of uneasiness and fear which lies deep within it is urged to deeds of ill-will and enmity, and this is a trial to the love and faith of good but over-conscious disciples, because it seems to dishonour their Lord. But our blessed Saviour seems from the sepulchre to say: "Stand still, and see the salvation of God."

ISAAC WILLIAMS, *The Epistles and Gospels*, vol. i., p. 386.

Chap. vi., ver. 4.—"That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

THERE are three characteristics of the risen life of our Lord which especially challenge attention.

I. Of these the first is its reality. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was a real resurrection of a dead body. Men have thought to effect a compromise between their own unbelief or half belief and the language of the apostles, by saying that Christ rose in the hearts of His disciples—that their idea of the spirit and character and work of their Master was too bright, too glorious a thing to be buried in His grave, and that when the first agony of grief was passed the Crucified One presented Himself again vividly to their loving imaginations in even more than His ancient beauty. But, supposing a process of imagination such as this to have taken place in the case of one or two or three minds, is it reasonable to suppose that it can have taken place simultaneously in a great many minds? The nearer men came to the risen Jesus the more satisfied they were that He had risen indeed. The first lesson which the risen Christ teaches the Christian is reality, genuineness.

II. A second characteristic of Christ's risen life—it lasts. Jesus did not rise that, like Lazarus, He might die again. So, too, should it be with the Christian. His, too, should be a resurrection once for all

III. A last note of Christ's risen life. Much of it, most of it, was hidden from the eyes of men. They saw quite enough to be satisfied of its reality, but of the eleven recorded appearances five took place on a single day, and there is, accordingly, no record of any appearance on thirty-three days out of the forty which preceded the Ascension. And who can fail to see here a lesson and a law for the true Christian life? Of every such life much, and the most important side, must be hidden from the

eyes of men. Alas for those who know so little of the true source of our moral force as to see in secret communion with God only the indulgence of unpractical sentiment, as to fail to connect these precious hours of silence with the beauty and strength of many of the noblest and most productive lives that have been seen in Christendom.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 429.

Chap. vi., ver. 4.—"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life."

I. THE death and burial of our Lord were but the fulfilment of His purpose when He took our flesh in the womb of the Virgin. He was in that grave before He appeared in the world. He appeared in this world that He might descend into the grave again. Every hour that He dwelt here He was giving up His body and soul, confessing that there was no life of their own in them. The glory of the Father had gone with Him through every hour of His earthly pilgrimage, raising up His body and soul, and enabling them to fulfil the work which had been given Him to do. The glory of the Father went with Him into the grave, and it brought Him back in that human soul and body, unhurt by death, unweakened by His conflict with the powers of darkness, to show forth the might of His heavenly life and to be the means through which it should be bestowed upon those for whom He died.

II. Christ's baptism was a burial: it was giving up His soul and body to death and the grave; it was "declaring life is not in them, but in Thee." Our baptism is a burial; it is a giving up of our body and soul, and declaring life is not in them, but in Him. As Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we have His glory with us to raise us from our grave, to enable us to think what of ourselves we cannot think, to do what of ourselves we cannot do. This life is given to us. It is not dependent upon the weakness of our bodies or of our souls. It is assured to us by a promise which cannot be broken. It is stored up for us in One who cannot die.

F. D. MAURICE, *Christmas Day and Other Sermons*, p. 236.

Chap. vi., ver. 4.—"Even so we also should walk in newness of life."

CONSIDER the New Life of the Believer.

I. First, in this present life, our souls begin to be drawn up to ascending desires—to nearer communion, to loftier enjoy-

ments, to a more heavenly-mindedness. Afterwards at the resurrection, by the same process, our bodies will be raised up. When He appears in the heavens, by a necessary, irresistible, attractive force, our bodies will be raised from the grave, and we shall be "for ever with the Lord." So that the Divine life in a man's soul does not take place till there is first a death and a burial and a resurrection within him; and all that is the result of a certain union with the Lord Jesus Christ; so that Christ's death and Christ's burial and Christ's resurrection are, to that man, not only facts done for him, but things done in him, and things actually taking place at this moment, real, felt, producing direct visible results. And when we trace the secret inworkings, in a Christian's soul, of such strange, unprecedented things as these, surely to such deep and wondrous mysteries we can only justly apply the Apostle's words, and say, "It is newness of life."

II. But as the formation of it is new, so it is in its own constitution. God's way of making a new thing is not man's way. God uses up the old materials, but by His using and moulding them makes them new. What is the new element thrown in to make a new man? Love—simply love. The man receives what he feels to be an inestimable gift, and his heart goes forth after the Giver—that Giver who bought that gift for him by the purchase of His own blood.

III. Once more, the Christian life is new by reason of that ceaseless variety and never-ending progression, that constant newness which it has in it. He who has set himself to be a Christian has to do with the infinities of God. He has a field in which he can expatiate for ever, and yet never retreat one pace. He is always enlarging his sphere, and with augmented capabilities taking in extended services; he experiences the charm of a sanctified novelty; and every hour he finds a literalness in the expression in this world, as he will find it for ever and ever, "newness of life."

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 1865, No. 491.

Chap. vi., ver. 4.—"Newness of Life."

FRESHNESS of Being.

In everything which is really of God there is a singular freshness; it is always like that tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; there is a continual novelty. And yet some people speak of the sameness of a religious life!

I. What is newness? It is not the creation of new matter. Creations in that sense are things of the far past. It is better than creation. The old goes to make the new. The old passions, the old bias, the old elements of the natural man, go to make the strength, the elevation, of the new creation,—the same, yet not the same. Take an instance. Self is the ruling principle of every man whom the grace of God has not changed. Self is his god. Now, how is it in the Christian? He has union with Christ; therefore in him self and Christ are one. By a blessed reaction his God is now himself—his new self, his real self; his life is the life of God in his soul; his happiness is God's glory; therefore still he studies self, but self is Christ.

II. Let us trace where the newness lies. First, there is set in the believer a new motive, a new spring welling up. "I am forgiven—God loves me. How shall I repay Him?" A new current flows in the man's life-blood, he feels the springs of his immortality, he carries in him his own eternity. And he goes forth, that man, into the old world; its scenes are just the same, but a new sunshine lies upon everything—it is the medium of his new-born peace, it is a smile of God. Christ reveals Himself to him with ever-increasing clearness. And all the while he carries a happy conviction that it is inexhaustible, that his progress is to be perpetuated for ever and ever; and by faith he shall be learning more, feeling more, enjoying more, doing more, glorifying more—that for ever and ever he shall walk in newness of life.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 141.

REFERENCES: vi. 4.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. ii., p. 253; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 1; *Sermons on the Catechism*, p. 219; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 7th series, p. 9; H. P. Liddon, *Easter Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 19.

Chap. vi., vers. 4-8.

CHRIST'S Resurrection an Image of our New Life.

Our new life is like that of our risen Saviour—

I. In the manner of His resurrection. In order to appear to His disciples in that glorified form, which already bore in it the indications of the eternal and immortal glory, it was necessary that the Saviour should pass through the pains of death. It was not an easy transformation; it was necessary for Him, though not to see corruption, yet to have the shadow of death pass over Him; and friends and enemies vied with each other in trying to retain Him in the power of the grave: the friends

rolling a stone before it, to keep the beloved corpse in safety, the enemies setting a watch lest it should be taken away. But when the hour came which the Father had reserved in His own power, the angel of the Lord appeared and rolled away the stone from the tomb and the watch fled, and at the summons of omnipotence life came back to the dead form. Thus we know what is the new life that is to be like the resurrection life of the Lord. A previous life must die; the Apostle calls it the body of sin, the law of sin in our members, and this needs no lengthened discussion. We all know and feel that this life, which Scripture calls a being dead in sins, pleasant and splendid as may be the form it often assumes, is yet nothing but what the mortal body of the Saviour also was, an expression and evidence of the power of death, because even the fairest and strongest presentation of this kind lacks the element of being imperishable. Thus with the mortal body of the Saviour, and thus also with the natural life of man, which is as yet not a life from God.

II. And, secondly, this new life resembles its type and ideal, the resurrection life of Christ, not only in being risen from death, but also in its whole nature, way, and manner. (1) In this respect, that although a new life, it is nevertheless the life of the same man, and in the closest connection with his former life. (2) And as the Saviour was the same person in the days of His resurrection, so His life was also again of course a vigorous and active life; indeed we might almost say it bore the traces of humanity, without which it could be no image of our new life, even in this, that it gradually grew stronger and acquired new powers. (3) But along with all this activity and strength, the life of the risen Saviour was yet, in another sense, a secluded and hidden life. And so it is with the new life in which we walk, even if it is as it ought to be strong and vigorous, and ever at work for the kingdom of God; yet it is at the same time an unknown and hidden life, unrecognised by and hidden from the world, whose eyes are holden.

III. We cannot feel all these comforting and glorious things in which our new life resembles the resurrection life of our Lord, without being at the same time, on another side, moved to sorrow by this resemblance. For if we put together all that the evangelists and the apostles of the Lord have preserved for us about His resurrection life, we still cannot out of it all form an entirely consecutive history. Not that in Himself there was anything of a broken or uncertain life, but as to our view of it

it is and cannot but be so. Well, and is it not, to our sorrow, the same with the new life that is like Christ's resurrection life? We are by no means conscious of this new life as an entirely continuous state; on the contrary, each of us loses sight of it only too often, not only among friends, among disturbances and cares, but amidst the commendable occupations of this world. Therefore we must go back to Him who is the only fountain of this spiritual life and find it in Him.

F. SCHLEIERMACHER, *Selected Sermons*, p. 266.

Chap. vi. vers. 5, 6.

ASSIMILATION through Faith.

I. Among the elements of human character we have really no deeper or more powerful agent for working a great change than faith, if we understand it fairly. The word covers the most entire devotion of heart and will which a man can repose in any person whom he justly regards as wiser, nobler, stronger, and more trustworthy than himself. It means, if you will, what among men is called hero-worship; and there is no force known to the student of human nature or of history which has proved itself capable of altering the lives of men so profoundly as this. It combines the strongest motives and the most sustaining elements in character, such as confidence, loyalty, affection, reverence, authority, and moral attractiveness. Take a single element, not at all the noblest, in this complex relationship which we term "faith." Take the mere persuasion of one man that another is able and willing to aid him in his enterprises. What is there such a dependant will not do at the instance of his patron? What change will he not make in his plans rather than forfeit substantial assistance from that quarter on which all his hopes are built? This is faith of a sort, surely, which works powerfully. Add to such a selfish expectation of help the far deeper bond of personal reverence or of proud, admiring love. The Christian owes to Jesus obedience for the service He has rendered, and for the right He possesses to command. Does it seem any longer a thing futile or unreasonable to say, that through such faith as that a man may come to grow together into one with the Divine object of his devotion, until the man's life is penetrated with Christ's Spirit and conformed in everything to His matchless likeness?

II. Such a change as this, being not a change merely in a man's conduct, or in the mode in which his character manifests itself, but one deep enough to reverse the springs of character

and form anew the spiritual attachments of the person himself, is reasonably enough ascribed to a special Divine agency. Such faith and such attachment come of the operation of God. When the old man dies and a new man lives in a human being there is an evident re-birth; and for that we must postulate an immediate operation of the Divine Giver of Life.

J. Oswald Dykes, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 155.

References: vi. 5, 6.—*Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 124. vi. 5-7.—*Ibid.*, new series, vol. iv. p. 208. vi. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xv., No. 882; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 151.

Chap. vi., ver. 7.—"For he that is dead is freed from sin."

I. "For he that hath died," as it should be rendered, "is justified from sin." The moment the Spirit of God works within the human soul a conviction of sin, there springs up an intense longing to obtain rest. With a burning desire no language can portray, far less exaggerate, the soul cries out for peace. Conviction of sin burns within the breast like live coals. There is no peace, no happiness, no comfort in this life to the convinced sinner. He must have peace, or he feels that reason itself can hardly bear the dire strain. Only an intelligent view of how God saves a sinner can ever give a man a truly solid peace. Where many err, and therefore do not enter into real solid peace, is that they do not know the difference between forgiveness and justification. And yet there is a very great difference between the two. If the punishment due from the law to any sin be endured, the offender that moment becomes as if he had never committed the sin. As Paul says, "He that is dead"—that is, he that has had the penalty for sin and endured it—"is justified from sin." Every one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ has the benefit of His death, and therefore it is just as if he had received his punishment. God cannot wink at sin. He never did and never will. But though He cannot excuse one sin, He can justly forgive a million.

II. The death of Christ settles the whole account. He has paid the last penny—cleared the score right off—and there is nothing left for you or me to pay. We can say of Christ, He is our Resurrection and our Life; in Him we died, and in His resurrection we rose again and rose to an immortal life, for we shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck us out of His hand.

A. G. Brown, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1053

Reference: vi. 7.—J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 7th series, p. 303.

Chap. vi., vers. 7-10.

CHRIST'S Death to Sin.

When we ask what is meant by affirming of Christ, "The death that He died, He died unto sin," two questions emerge. (1) What connection had Jesus with sin before His death? (2) How came His dying to sever that connection?

1. As to the former. The connection of the Lord Jesus with sin so long as He lived an earthly life was the most complete which it is possible for a sinless person to have. Who will venture to say that St. Paul's terrible phrase "made a curse" is too strong to express the hold which sin's penalty laid upon our victim, or that the whole of our Lord's stainless humanity was not wrapt around and penetrated through and through by the tremendous retributive force of sin? Connection with sin! He was all sin's own; its prey, surrendered for some Divine necessity to the devourer; the choicest portion ever seized upon to be borne down to the keeping of sin's child, death, within sin's home, the grave.

II. The whole of this connection with sin is said to have terminated at death. It has not been so with any other man. Other men spend their earthly existence under the same penal conditions as I have described in His case; but what room have we to suppose that the act of dying has proved to be in any other case the end of sin, unless it were through their connection with Him? The death of Jesus closed His connection with sin, for the simple reason that in His case alone that connection had been outward, not inward; a guiltless submission to sin's penalty, not a guilty surrender to sin's power. From first to last the sin which is in our race remained to Him a foreign foe, that could gain no entrance into the citadel of His will to corrupt or master His spiritual nature; and the connection which He sustained with it was merely that of a sufferer who owes a death to justice for imputed sins of other men. Once that death was paid, and all the suffering endured which filled up the cup put into His hand to be drunk, His connection with imputed sin was of necessity dissolved. "The death which He died was a death unto sin—once for all."

J. OSWALD DYKES, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 164.

Chap. vi., ver. 8.—"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."

I. As a tree cannot live and grow, cannot bear flowers and fruit, and expand itself towards heaven, unless it be first rooted

and buried in the ground, so neither can the love of God in the soul, unless that which is earthly be dead and buried with Christ in His death. It is therefore at baptism that this love is by the Holy Spirit planted within us; it is then that we are buried with Christ, in order that we may live with Him that life which is in God, in holy affections now and in fulness of joy hereafter. Such, therefore, is the subject of the Epistle for to-day (Sixth Sunday after Trinity). The Christian dwells in continual contemplation on the Cross and death of Christ; it is there his heart and affections are fixed; it is there he finds a remedy against sin and strength against temptation. And as we naturally become like that which we contemplate, it is to him an inexpressible satisfaction to reflect that by his very baptism and new birth he is himself there, dead with Christ and buried, in order that he might find in Him a better life; that the very strength and life of his baptism consists in his being thus made conformable to Christ's death. "Out of the strong comes forth sweetness," out of death life; and to resign earthly hopes, pleasures, and advantages does require that the heart hath found something better, the treasure of new affections which it values more.

II. Dead we are with Christ by baptism, by His power and grace, and dead we must also be in the habits of our new life, in order that such Divine life may be continued in Him; and all this from the most intimate reference to Him. The frequent mention of Christ in the inculcating of Christian precept and doctrine implies in our lives also, and in the fulfilling of all Christian precept and doctrine, the frequent recurrence to Him as that source of life. Love is ever thinking of the object beloved; delights in acting with a view to it; to be likened to it; to cling to it; to become more and more one with it. But this love, as being contrary to our corrupted nature, must be forcibly sustained by doing violence to ourselves, and by all outward means; by frequent communion with Him in prayer and meditation, by giving of alms and active charities, and more especially by a frequent participation of His body and blood.

J. WILLIAMS, *The Epistles and Gospels*, vol. ii., p. 82.

LOVE of Religion—a New Nature.

I. To be dead with Christ is to hate and turn from sin, and to live with Him is to have our hearts and minds turned towards God and heaven. To be dead to sin is to feel a disgust at it. We know what is meant by disgust. Take, for

instance, the case of a sick man, when food of a certain kind is presented to him, and there is no doubt what is meant by disgust. On the other hand, consider how pleasant a meal is to the hungry, or some enlivening odour to the faint; how refreshing the air is to the languid, or the brook to the weary and thirsty; and you will understand the sort of feeling which is implied in being alive with Christ, alive to religion, alive to the thought of heaven. Our animal powers cannot exist in all atmospheres; certain airs are poisonous, others life-giving. So is it with spirits and souls: an unrenewed spirit could not live in heaven, he would die; an angel could not live in hell. To be dead to sin is to be so minded that the atmosphere of sin oppresses, distresses, and stifles us,—that it is painful and unnatural for us to remain in it. To be alive with Christ is to be so minded that the atmosphere of heaven refreshes, enlivens, stimulates, invigorates us. To be alive is not merely to bear the thought of religion, to assent to the truth of religion, to wish to be religious, but to be drawn towards it, to love it, to delight in it, to obey it. Now, I suppose most persons called Christians do not go further than this—to wish to be religious, and to think it right to be religious, and to feel a respect for religious men; they do not get so far as to have any sort of love for religion.

II. A holy man is by nature subject to sin equally with others; but he is holy because he subdues, tramples on, chains up, imprisons, puts out of the way this law of sin, and is ruled by religious and spiritual motives. Even those who in the end turn out to be saints and attain to life eternal, yet are not born saints, but have, with God's regenerating and renewing grace, to make themselves saints. It is nothing but the Cross of Christ without us and within us, which changes any one of us from being (as I may say) a devil, into an angel. Even to the end the holiest men have remains and stains of sin which they would fain get rid of if they could, and which keep this life from being to them, in all God's grace, a heaven upon earth. No, the Christian life is but a shadow of heaven. Its festal and holy days are but shadows of eternity. But hereafter it will be otherwise. In heaven sin will be utterly destroyed in every elect soul. We shall have no earthly wishes, no tendencies to disobedience or irreligion, no love of the world or the flesh, to draw us off from supreme devotion to God. We shall have our Saviour's holiness fulfilled in us, and be able to love God without drawback or infirmity.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 179.

REFERENCE: vi. 8.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 87.

Chap. vi., vers. 8-11.

I. The basis of the Apostle's sentiment here is the death of Christ. The death of Christ is the fact. Christ died for our sins. Calvary, its associations, its wonderful mystery and blessedness, were present to the Apostle's mind; and, however progressive spiritually his view might be, he never lost sight of what took place in Jerusalem—never lost sight of the Lord in His crucifixion and resurrection. In Christ's death he might be said to die to sin as well as for it, for he had done with sin.

II. In the second place, with this basis of history, we find that there is also a basis of prophecy,—it is implied here, at least respecting Christ and His people. Paul saw a grand future for Christ and the Church. "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him." In the eighth chapter of this Epistle we have the outburst of the music, but in the sixth chapter we have the undertone in the same strain; for he says, "If we be dead in Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him," and the eighth chapter is but the expansion and development of that sublime idea. There is therefore a basis of prophecy as well as of history.

III. Note the use which the Apostle makes of the past and the future in reference to his spiritual life. He fixes upon the historical fact that Christ died, and died for our sins, and he will not let that for an instant go. But he spiritualises it, and shows its relation to his daily experience. He teaches that between us and Christ there comes an identification and sympathy, through which we feel like Him, and act like Him, and become one with Him, imitating His example, and becoming conformed to His image and His type of life, from a moral power which flows from His death into our life. There is a dying unto sin in the case of all true believers, through their union by faith with Christ, who died so many years ago. So, too, St. Paul makes the resurrection of Christ a moral power in us, so that we rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.

J. Stoughton, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 637, new series.

References: vi. 8-11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 503; G. Calthrop, *Words Spoken to My Friends*, p. 120; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 83.

Chap. vi., ver. 9.—"Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more."

Christ Risen, Dieth no More.

I. The resurrection brings joy to the human soul because it asserts that which is by no means written legibly for all men

on the face of nature and of life—the truth that the spiritual is higher than the material; the truth that, in this universe, spirit counts for something more than matter. There are, no doubt, abstract arguments which might go to show that this is the case; but the resurrection is a palpable fact which means this, if it means anything at all,—that the ordinary laws of animal existence are visibly, upon sufficient occasion, set aside in obedience to a higher spiritual force. It was, we all of us know, no natural force, like that of growth, which raised Jesus Christ our Lord from His grave. "Christ being raised from the dead." The resurrection is not merely an article of the Creed; it is a fact in the history of mankind. That our Lord Jesus Christ was "begotten of the Father before all worlds" is also an article of the Christian faith; but then it has nothing to do with human history, and so it cannot be shown to have taken place, like any event, say, in the life of Julius Cæsar, by the reported testimony of eye-witnesses. It belongs to another sphere. It is believed simply on account of the proved trustworthiness of Him who has taught us this truth on His own authority about His eternal person. But that Christ rose from the dead is a fact which depends on the same sort of testimony as any event in the life of Cæsar, with this difference, that no one ever thought it worth his while, so far as I know, to risk his life in order to maintain that Cæsar defeated Vercingetorix or Pompey. The resurrection of Christ breaks the iron wall of uniformity which goes so far to shut out God. It tells us that matter is not the governing principle of the universe. It assures us that matter is controlled by mind, that there is a Being, that there is a will, to which matter can offer no effective resistance, that He is not bound by the laws of the universe, that He in fact controls them.

II. Christ's risen life is to us a fact of undying significance. The resurrection was not an isolated miracle, done and then over, leaving things much as they had been before. The risen Christ is not, like Lazarus, marked off from every other man as one who had visited the realms of death, but knowing that he must ere many years pass be a tenant of the grave. "Christ, being risen from the dead, dieth no more." His risen body is made up of flesh, bone, and all things pertaining to the perfection of man's nature; but then it has superadded qualities. It is so spiritual that it can pass through closed doors without collision or disturbance. It is beyond the reach of those causes which, slowly or swiftly, bring down our bodies to the dust. Throned

in the heavens, now, as during the forty days on earth, it is endowed with the beauty, with the glory, of an eternal youth. Being raised from the dead, it dies no more. The perpetuity of the life of the risen Jesus is the guarantee of the perpetuity of His Church. Alone, among all forms of society which bind men together, the Church of Christ is insured against complete dissolution. When our Lord was born the civilised world was almost entirely comprised within the Roman empire, a vast social power which may well have appeared, as it did appear to the men of that age, destined to last for ever. Since then the Roman empire has as completely disappeared from the earth as if it had never been. And other kingdoms and dynasties have risen up and have in turn gone their way. Nor is there any warrant or probability that any one of the states or forms of civil government which exist at the present time will always last. And there are men who tell us that the kingdom of Christ is or will be no exception to the rule—that it too has seen its best days and is passing. We Christians know that they are wrong, that whatever else may happen one thing is impossible—the complete effacement of the Church of Jesus Christ. And what is our reason for this confidence? It is because we know that Christ's Church, although having likeness to other societies of men in her outward form and mien, is unlike them inwardly and really. She strikes her roots far and deep into the invisible; she draws strength from sources which cannot be tested by our political or social experience. Like her Master, she has meat to eat that men know not of. "God is in the midst of her, and therefore shall she not be removed; God shall help her, and that right early."

III. Christ, risen from death, dying no more, is the model of our new life in grace. I do not mean that absolute sinlessness is attainable by any Christian here. But at least faithfulness in our intentions, avoidance of known sources of danger, escape from presumptuous sins, innocence, as the Psalmist puts it, of the great offence—these things are possible, and indeed are necessary. Those lives which are made up of alternating recovery and relapse—recovery, perhaps, during Lent, followed by relapse after Easter, and even lives lived, as it were, with one foot in the grave, without anything like a strong vitality, with their feeble prayers, with their half-indulged inclinations, with their weaknesses which may be physical, but which a really regenerate will should at once away with—men risen from the dead, yet without any seeming promise of endurance in life—what would

St. Paul say to these? "Christ," he would say, "being risen from the dead, dieth no more." Just as He left His tomb once for all, so should the soul, once risen, be dead indeed unto sin. There must be no hovering about the sepulchre, no treasuring the grave-clothes, no secret hankering after the scent and atmosphere of the guilty past. Cling to the risen Saviour. Cling to Him by entreaties which twine themselves round His sacred person. Cling to Him by sacraments, the revealed points of contact with His strengthening manhood. Cling to Him by obedience and by works of mercy, through which, He tells us Himself, we abide in His love. And then, not in your own strength but in His, "likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

H. P. LIDDON, *Easter Sermons*, vol. i., p. 208.

REFERENCE: vi. 9.—C. W. Furse, *Sermons at Richmond*, p. 42.

Chap. vi., vers. 9-11.

I. THE death to sin must be a death to its service as well as to its penalty, if the soul has come under that wretched bondage. There is hardly anything more emphatically and clearly laid down throughout St. Paul's epistles than this of the new life which is expected of Christian men, nor any doctrine with which the saintly life is more closely connected and on which it is as it were based, than the death and burial and resurrection of our Saviour Christ. And we must not put it away from us. Better a thousand times to be truthful witnesses and to abhor ourselves. Better a thousand times to hate the memory of that formal service which rests its confidence in continual acts of repentance for continual acts of wilful sin. The life of sin the Apostle supposes *dead*.

II. How marvellously persistent is the Apostle, is the Holy Spirit, in finding a plain living duty in the sublimest doctrines of religion; in drawing a precept which shall supply occupation for the whole human life, and exercise every faculty of the human heart, from events the most mysterious and Divine.

III. We must be ashamed when we examine ourselves to see how miserably short we fall of the Divine standard and requirements. Let us review our miserably imperfect practice, and seek to begin a higher, a purer, a better life.

J. W. BURGON, *Ninety-one Short Sermons*, No. 41.

REFERENCES: vi. 9-11.—E. H. Gifford, *The Glory of God in Man*, p. 1. vi. 10, 11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 20; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. vii., p. 111.

vi. 11.—H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. ii., p. 53; *Homilist*, new series, vol. iii., p. 314; W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 251; G. Bainton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 169; C. G. Finney, *Gospel Themes*, p. 380; Bishop Temple, *Rugby Sermons*, 1st series, p. 306.

Chap. vi., vers. 11-14.

On Realising the Ideal.

I. What is the theory of the Christian's condition? As just explained by the Apostle, it is this: The Christian is a man who, like his Master, is already dead to all sin and alive only towards God. He has ceased, in other words, to have anything further to do with sin. With God he has everything further to do This has resulted, as a matter of course, from the close union, or, as it were, incorporation, which his faith has effected betwixt him and Jesus Christ. In theory, the believer has just as little to do with sin as Jesus has in heaven; which lets us see a little how St. Paul can elsewhere employ such amazing language about mortal man as this—"Risen with Christ," "Sitting with Christ in heaven," their life hid with Him in God. Such is Christian life in its conception. Such it must aim at becoming in fact.

II. It is obviously with a practical design that the writer bids the Christian cherish such a conception of his proper character. All life strives to fulfil itself. It makes for that which it was made to be. In the moral training of character, there is no better way of attaining an ideal than to be persuaded that it is the true ideal for us. Put the matter in this form: You are a man supposed to be in idea dead to all sin. Yet in a given instance an evil desire has mastered you. Is there not betwixt these two facts an incongruity, not simply painful, but intolerable? They cannot possibly hang together. A contradiction in fact between your theoretical position and your actual conduct is not a state of matters in which you can rest. Either your ideal must be abandoned, or an effort must be made to shape your behaviour in compliance with it. But your ideal is what you dare not abandon, for that would be to abandon Christ. The conclusion becomes irresistible: let not this wrong desire lord it any longer in this fashion over you—a man dead to all sin. Let the believer then think what he is, that he may become what he ought to be. Broken off from sin, let there be no feeble or furtive concession to it at any point. Live solely for the work of God. Let us spend ourselves wholly in His pure and beneficent service.

J. Oswald Dykes, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 172.

Chap. vi., ver. 12.—"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body."

THE Dual Life of Man.

I. There are in every one of us opposing elements, there live within us an Adam and a Christ; the angel has us by the hand or the serpent by the heart. Plato describes human nature as consisting of a threefold being bound into one, a many-headed monster, a lion, and a man. The monster represents all the lowest and the basest and most animal impulses of our nature; the lion represents the passionate irascible side of our nature, in itself noble, but liable to be dangerously uncontrolled; the man represents the reason and the conscience, the ruling power within us. Plato says we can never attain the true nature of our being except when the man and the lion are at one, the man having supreme power, and both together holding the monster of the baser passions under absolute control.

II. Three warnings arise out of this subject. (1) We are accountable to God for ourselves—for our whole selves. We cannot disintegrate our individuality, we cannot claim to be good while yet we habitually do evil, we cannot be in a state of sin and yet claim to be in a state of grace. Yet this is the self-deception into which men constantly fall. When they go out, like Judas, to sell their Lord, it is not in the daytime; it is in the night of their own self-deception. We have all need of the daily prayer, "God harden me against myself." (2) We cannot be too careful what we make ourselves. Even the feelings which might be honourable and harmless may be betrayed by excess or by neglect. Our passions are like the waves of the sea, and without the aid of Him who made the human breast we cannot say to its tide, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." (3) As we feel our evil passions and their mastery over us, so by the grace of God can we get rid of our worse selves altogether. It is not possible by our own unaided strength, but Christ died that it might be more than possible to all that trust in Him. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts; they are renewed in the image of God. In them the old self is conquered indeed, the body of sin is destroyed, so that they are no longer the slaves of sin; they walk in newness of life.

F. W. FARRAR, *Family Churchman*, March 31st, 1886.

REFERENCES: vi. 13.—*Good Words*, vol. iii., pp. 762, 763; R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v, p. 251. vi. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xv., No. 901; vol. xxiv., No. 1410; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 103. vi. 14, 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1735.

Chap. vi., vers. 15-23.

BONDMEN of Righteousness.

I. St. Paul's manner of thinking is frequently hard to follow. One peculiarity which contributes to make it a difficult exercise to track his reasoning is this: on the threshold of a fresh train of ideas, when the subject which fills his mind has been no more than started, it is not uncommon to find him suddenly break off in order to interject some side thought which has just occurred to him. Of this habit we have an instance before us. The objection springs up suddenly. If a Christian is no longer under the law of Moses, but under the free, that is, the unmerited, favour of God as the source of His salvation, is not this a distinct licence to him to sin? To that recurring difficulty there never has been, nor ever can be, any valid reply save one: this, namely, that the very change which is involved in a man's becoming a believer in God's free grace through Christ renders his continuance in sin a practical impossibility. Christians were slaves to sin once, no doubt; but conversion has broken that service in order that they should enter another. They are now "servants unto righteousness."

II. The expression "enslaved to righteousness" is indeed an unusually strong one, even for St. Paul; so strong that he deems it well to apologise for it (ver. 19). For while the practice of sin is really a moral slavery, as our Lord Himself taught, seeing that it involves the subjugation of what is noblest in a man beneath some base or petty desire of which in his heart he feels ashamed, there is no true bondage in obeying God. On the contrary, the law of righteousness is the law of man's original, proper nature,—his native law, so to speak. To follow it is to act freely. Accordingly, when the Apostle spoke about being a slave of righteousness, he employed language which he felt to be harsh, because, in any strict sense of it, both inaccurate and unworthy. Nevertheless, St. Paul endeavours to say what he means in more precise and less metaphorical language. What it amounts to is this. That as a man previous to his conversion to Christ yielded up his faculties to execute lawless desires, and thus did the work of lawlessness as a slave serves his master, so, after conversion has put an end to that, he must, in a similar way, give himself up to perform the lawful or righteous will of God.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 182.

REFERENCES: vi. 15-23.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1482; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 18; H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *The Life*

of Duty, vol. ii., p. 61 ; *Homilist*, new series, vol. iv., p. 653 ; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 125 ; R. Molyneux, *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 189. vi. 16-19.—E. de Pressensé, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 93. vi. 17.—Bishop Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 17.

Chap. vi., ver. 18.—"Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

THE Strictness of the Law of Christ.

I. Religion is a necessary service; of course it is a privilege too, but it becomes more and more of a privilege the more we exercise ourselves in it. The perfect Christian state is that in which our duty and our pleasure are the same, when what is right and true is natural to us, and in which God's service is perfect freedom. And this is the state towards which all true Christians are tending: it is the state in which the angels stand; entire subjection to God in thought and deed is their happiness; an utter and absolute captivity of their will to His will is their fulness of joy and everlasting life. But it is not so with the best of us, except in part. We have a work, a conflict all through life.

II. I may seem to have been saying what every one will at once confess. And yet, after all, nothing perhaps is so rare among those who profess to be Christians, as an assent in practice to the doctrine that they are under a law: nothing so rare as strict obedience, unreserved submission to God's will, uniform conscientiousness in doing their duty. Most Christians will allow in general terms that they are under a law, but then they admit it with a reserve; they claim for themselves some dispensing power in their observance of the law. Whether men view the law of conscience as high or low, as broad or narrow, few indeed there are who make it a rule to themselves.

III. Let us not deceive ourselves: what God demands of us is to fulfil His law, or at least to aim at fulfilling it; to be content with nothing short of perfect obedience,—to attempt everything,—to avail ourselves of the aids given us, and throw ourselves, not first but afterwards, on God's aid for our shortcomings. We Christians are indeed under the law as other men, but it is the new law, the law of the Spirit of Christ. We are under grace. That law which to nature is a grievous bondage, is to those who live under the power of God's presence, what it was meant to be, a rejoicing. Let us go to Him for grace. Let us seek His face. "They that wait upon the Lord," says the Prophet, "shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with

wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 1.

REFERENCES: vi. 18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1482. vi. 19.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 18. vi. 20.—H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. ii., p. 61. vi. 21.—Prothero, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 161. vi. 22.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. iv., p. 653; 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 39; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 21; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 125; R. Molyneux, *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 189.

Chap. vi., ver. 23.—"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE Choice of Life.

I. St. Paul is setting before us in a figure the choice of two lives—the life of a Christian, life in Christ, and the life of one who is not a Christian, who has not the Christian's aim nor the Christian's hope. He is setting this before us in a figure; and it is, on the whole, the figure which is so familiar to us in our own baptismal service and catechism. Both, he tells us, involve service. In some of the expressions he is thinking of the service of a servant, in others (as in this word wages—*ὀψώνια* the soldier's allowance) of military service. We can choose our master, our leader; but serve *some one*, do some one's work, fight in some one's cause, we *must*. We may serve God or we may serve sin. He has been striving in the last verses to bring out the contrasts of the two services. They differ in their objects, their aim, their methods, their issue. The text is the last word in the comparison. It contrasts their rewards. But in doing so St. Paul breaks away, as it were, from the similitude; says, as he so often does, "Remember that it is a figure, not the whole truth; no figure can comprehend that." Life is a service; all fight in some ranks. The figure holds in many points, but not in all, not absolutely in one particular point. Service supposes wages, some return for the service, earned and to be paid. And the service of sin has its wages, something that answers to that figure in at least one regard. They are wages earned, the pay of a soldier's toilsome and dangerous service,—though they are not the wages looked for, nor such as make up the campaign. "The wages of sin, the hard-earned wages, is *death*." It would have followed, it might seem, to say, "The wages, the earned reward, of righteousness is life"; but St. Paul does not say so. There the figure fails. The true soldier and servant of goodness and God knows only

too well that he earns no reward; the enemy whom he is to fight is not without him only, but within, in his own half-traitorous heart. No; it is not the wages of goodness, but "the *gift* of God" given to the unworthy through Jesus Christ our Lord.

II. The wages of sin is death. That will be the end of living for pleasure, living for self, living only for this world. The end of living for pleasure is death. You must sacrifice to it things infinitely more precious, and then the pleasures die. They last but a moment; and presently the faculty of pleasure dies. At first we fail to see that this is happening, because there is a change and succession of pleasures. Life has some small variety of pleasures, and they are so disposed that to our inexperienced eye they look endless; but we soon exhaust them. They become but repetitions, and then they cease to please. And so is all self-seeking. We cannot live for self without starving the more generous instincts and forfeiting the higher blessings of life. And self cannot satisfy. All purely selfish success turns to vanity and vexation of spirit. And this world itself passes. The things that are seen are temporal. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"—life ever deepening, widening; self-conquest, freedom, the conscience growing more sensitive and more completely mistress of the life, all instincts and perceptions of moral beauty growing keener, all lofty and generous emotions strengthening the sense of God's nearness, the trust in His goodness, the sympathy with His purposes, for ever increasing, brightening to the perfect day.

E. C. WICKHAM, *Wellington College Sermons*, p. 125.

REFERENCES: vi. 23.—E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. i., p. 15; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1459; C. G. Finney, *Sermons on Gospel Themes*, p. 37; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 6th series, p. 29; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1868; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 186; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 84; *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 22; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 125; J. Burbidge, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 33; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 6th series, p. 29; C. G. Finney, *Gospel Themes*, p. 37. vi. 24.—E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. i., p. 15.

Chap. vii., vers. 1-6.

"LAW *versus* Grace."

Note:—

I. St. Paul's maxim that it is death which puts an end to all obligation created by statute law. Expositors have often remarked how fond this apostle was of legal phraseology, and

especially of illustrations borrowed from jurisprudence. His whole doctrine of justification, as we have it in the earlier portion of this Epistle, is in fact cast in a forensic mould. The verses immediately preceding this chapter describe conversion in language borrowed from an ancient legal process for the manumission of slaves. In harmony with the same obvious tendency of his mind, St. Paul is here borrowing a legal maxim to set forth the necessity for our Lord's judicial death; and citing an instance of it from the marriage law of the Hebrews. The maxim is this: nothing save death can ordinarily cancel the binding obligation of civil law over its subjects; but death always does so. What we are clearly meant to gather from this legal illustration is that the decease of Jesus as the legal representative of His people was necessary, in order to dissolve the claims over them of the Divine law.

II. St. Paul contends that it is indispensable that men should be loosed from the legal obligation, if ever they were to attain to real holiness. The *lex scripta* of Mosaism failed because it was only a *lex scripta*. It stood over against the fallen nature of man as the bare utterance of a stronger will, an imperative as cold and rigid as the stone it was graved upon, with nothing about it to quicken inward affection or move the deep springs of spiritual good in the human heart. In the gospel a new Word steps into the vacant seat of moral control, and begins to exert his quickening influence upon the moral life. That other is Christ Himself, risen from the dead and reigning in virtue of the grace He brings. If I am so joined to Him as to be delivered from the law through His death, then I must be so joined to Him as to be animated by His life. In the room of the dead letter of Moses' decalogue, prescribing duty to a dead soul, Christ breathes into the man a living spirit. The love for what pleases God proves itself the parent of a troop of happy impulses and pure affections and glad obediences to all the holy and perfect will of our Father in heaven.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 191.

REFERENCE: vii. 1.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 248.

Chap. vii., ver. 4.—"Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ."

I. "YE are dead." This spiritual death must surely be in some profound sense—so often and so earnestly is the phrase reiterated—the mystical image of that death from which it derives its name. Whither does death conduct us? "To-day shalt

thou be with Me in paradise," said the Lord of Life to the dying penitent. He Himself "preached to spirits in confinement," preserved in the secret citadel of God; a world where, as He declared, all live unto Him, and whose happier region perhaps is typified by the bosom of Abraham, which the Jews employed to express it and which our Lord has consecrated by His adoption. The triumphant fulness of heavenly glory seems to demand the body no less than the spirit; and may we not fairly deem, with many of our safest and holiest divines, that there is beyond this scene, in some lone region of the illimitable universe, a home for the spirit, embodied, or clad it may be, with some fine and invisible materialism, where in the calm expectation of consummate bliss it learns the art of higher happiness, and trains its faculties for coming glory. And as in all our physical changes spiritual changes more essential seem pictured, I cannot but think that as our death represents the spiritual death that opens the Christian's course, so this intervening state of holy anticipation seems eminently to represent the peculiar blessedness that follows death to sin and to the law.

II. Departed saints are dead to the world, dead to its sins, dead to its avenging law. It cannot cast its shadow across the grave, and it cannot prolong one pang of bitterness, one touch of temptation. Its waves are broken beneath the walls of that sheltered paradise. These are the franchised of Christ and of death; dust has returned to dust that the spirit might return unto God; they have died into His eternal life. This is the story of the dying saint; such dying saints must you be even now, if you would live even now with Jesus.

W. ARCHER BUTLER, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 116.

REFERENCES: vii. 4.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 56 vii. 5-25.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. i., p. 109. vii. 6.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 11; *Ibid.*, *Sermons*, 10th series, p. 217. vii. 6, 25.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., p. 216.

Chap. vii., ver. 7.

I. THESE are searching words, and direct our thoughts to the hidden light in pursuance of the design of explaining and enforcing the plan of man's justification in the gospel through the merits of Jesus Christ by faith. The Apostle shows that all men, Jew and Gentile alike, are sinners, deserving of death; that the law could not justify because all had disobeyed the law; and by baptism into Christ's death the Christian had died, as it were, to the law, and is no more bound to the law

of the covenant than a woman after her husband's death is by the vows of her first marriage. Having thus been obliged to speak disparagingly of the law as a covenant in comparison with the gospel, the Apostle hastens to prevent an inference derogatory to the law itself, and consequently to the character of Him who gave it. The law has laid down a broad clear rule of right, and by taking away every plea of ignorance, and placing the weight of God's authority in the scale, it has, as it were, opened our eyes, and shown us that we are sinners.

II. Consider the sin of unlawful desires. The product of our corrupt nature may spring up spontaneously from the original soil, an evidence always of original sin, the parent of actual sin. The world is full of occasions which call them forth; the devil suggests, and the heart too readily answers to the call. They are the first steps towards the acts of sin and the actual violation of the letter of God's law, and when they in reality take place, the struggle issues, either in resisting the temptation by Divine grace and overcoming it, or a sin which results from yielding and defeat. The desire of sin, when indulged in, is as sinful as the act itself. The sinfulness of unlawful desires impresses upon us all the necessity of self-examination and watchfulness and prayer. Such desires are the natural offspring of our own evil heart, we are liable to their intrusion at all times and in all places. We should accustom ourselves to examine our desires, our thoughts, wishes, and external temptations, and judge them, not as carrying no guilt because not proceeding to the outward deed, but as mental acts, having their own moral character, and, as such, condemned or acquitted by the spiritual law of God. The weapons of this warfare of ours must not be carnal, but from God, and mighty to the pulling down of strongholds, if we would cast down the imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against God.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, March 11th, 1880

REFERENCES: vii. 7.—Bishop Temple, *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 145; *Ibid.*, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 145.

Chap. vii., vers. 7-13.

A CHAPTER in Saul's Early Life.

I. St. Paul repels with energy the idea that there can be anything essentially bad, unholy, or immoral about the blessed law of God itself. On the contrary, but for that law he could never have reached any real knowledge of sin. Only by the

law's clear discovery of moral good does it bring home to us the conviction of sin's sinfulness. During childhood, and sometimes well on into early youth, we do not realise God's law. A moment arrives when the law of God comes home to the conscience with new power. In the case of young Saul, it was especially the tenth commandment which came home. It became plain to him that God forbids not merely doing wrong, but wishing wrong. He saw that to be good, therefore, one has to watch the earliest budding of a bad wish within the heart—nay, that if the bad wish bud there at all, the law is already, and in that fact, broken. Ah! the happy dream life was ended then. Here was the death of all his peace and gladness. "Sin revived," says he, with a terse pathos, "sin awoke unto life, and I died."

II. The law had failed, then, shall we say? Instead of quenching sin in Saul's soul it had inflamed it. It had produced self-condemnation, inward strife, despair, and death. Was the law to blame for that? No, it was the very perfection and glory of the Decalogue that it contained that tenth and most spiritual precept. It was just its exceeding broadness and nobleness which made it impossible for unregenerate Saul to keep it. It was no fault of the law that it wrought in Saul lust and death; but it was the fault of what Saul had now learned to know as sin. Not sins, but sin: not sinfulness even as a simple quality of the sinner, but sin as a force, a dread and mighty factor in the human soul, which lies deep, deeper than desire, and proves itself strong, stronger than the better will that strives against it. In His mercy God meant men to learn this bitter, humbling, but most salutary lesson, that the natural heart is at enmity against God, since it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

J. Oswald Dykes, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 201.

Chap. vii., ver. 9.—"For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

The Place of the Law in the Salvation of Sinners.

We have here:—

I. A life which a man enjoys in and of himself before he knows God. "I was alive without the law once." This is the natural state of the fallen. It is here called life, and elsewhere it is called death. The wide diversity of the names employed to designate the same thing need not cause surprise. The one term expresses the true state of the man, and the other term

expresses the man's own view of his state. In God's sight it is death; in his own imagination it is life.

II. The Exodus from that Egypt; the escape from that false life by a dying. "The commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (1) "The commandment came." It is no longer an imitation law, modelled on the measure of his own attainments, which might be pressed upon his conscience, and yet not extinguish his self-righteous life. It is the unchanging will of the unchanging God—the word which liveth and abideth forever. It is a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces. (2) "Sin revived" at the entrance of this visitant. The commandment coming in did not cause, but only detected, sin. It was by the light of the commandment, when it came, that he discovered the sin which had all along been living and reigning in his heart and life. (3) "I died." The life in which he had hitherto trusted was extinguished then. Chased by the strange usurper from every part of its long-cherished home, the life flickers over it a moment, like the flame of an expiring lamp, and then darts away into the unseen.

III. He lives in another life. No interval of time separated the two. The death that led from one life was the birth of another. It is one act. The dying is the living. The exodus from this life is the entrance into that. He does not remain one moment dead. The instant after his death, you hear him exclaiming, "I died." His own voice declaring how and when he died is the surest evidence that he lives. "Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "Our life is hid with Christ in God."

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits*, p. 69.

REFERENCES: vii. 9.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 299. vii. 9-25.—H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 179.

Chap. vii., ver. 11.—"Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, . . . slew me."

I. THE sentiment of law, nowadays, is killing the living consciousness in man; it was so, it has been so, in all ages; man is not only in danger from the great majesties of nature, he is in danger not less from himself and from his own works. In many directions they are assuming proportions not less than terrible to him. He may say with the Apostle, "The law slew me." What, then, did the word *law* mean to St. Paul? What did he find in it? The whole Epistle to the Romans is an exhibition of the reconciliation made by God, of man with His

law. It is to us a cold, hard word; but it represents that which is highest in God—order, holiness, rectitude. The moderns think they have advanced far, when they discover that the universe moves upon the wheels of law. Paul plainly enough declares that, and he further opens his epistle declaring that man alone breaks through the barriers of law. This is the subject of the first chapter. Immoral is unlawful.

II. I conceive, then, that so long as we limit the Pauline conception of the word *law* to the legalism of Judaism, we do injustice, not only to the argument of the Apostle, but still more injustice to the scope and intention of the Christian system. When I hear Paul speak of the law of God, I understand by it God's expressed will. But then we know that will is the expression of God's character. God is a sovereign, but He has a law in His own being, beyond and beneath which He cannot go. He can do nothing unholy. He can do nothing wrong, nothing beneath the character of God.

III. The law of consciousness is used by the Apostle, when he rises from the review of the symmetry of things to the conditions of character by which God has made Himself known to us. But the birth of consciousness in the soul is the awakening of conscience; and while consciousness broods over matter, as a master over a slave, conscience, a still more inexorable master, broods over the consciousness. Law is still a terror, that which is fixed; the rigid hard law of things is still a sentence and a doom. But the law becomes our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. He is a new force in the soul. Terrified by what is fixed and arbitrary in law, I wanted to find the security of the law of permanence transcended by the law of change, and I find it here. I discover how "the law and the Spirit of life sets free from the law of sin," that is conscience, "and of death," that is nature.

E. Paxton Hood, *Dark Sayings on a Harp*, p. 173.

References: vii. 11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1045; C. J. Vaughan, *Lessons of the Cross and Passion*, p. 241.

Chap. vii., ver. 12.—"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

It is plain that the revelation of the law is made to assist us in copying the pattern which is there set before us. Consider the defect of character which is the natural consequence of not being fully impressed with each one of these three characteristics of God's government and His creation.

I. A man may be deficient in a sense of the holiness of the

law. Of course he who does not feel the holiness of the law will not fully feel its goodness, still less its justice. The defect of such a man's character is a tendency to be earthly. To have his hopes, his aims, his labours, bounded by this present life; to lose all hold of the heavenly, unearthly side of religion; to be much more moral than devotional; to cut out all his duties by an earthly pattern. This defect of character admits of many degrees. But it is plain that such a man is not fashioned on the highest type. His service may be genuine as far as it goes; but it is imperfect, not only as all human service is imperfect in the execution, but imperfect in the very conception and idea.

II. Again, a man may not have a strong sense of the goodness of God's law. Such a man, of course, has but a poor and narrow idea of holiness. But still he may have much more sense of that than of God's goodness. He shuts himself out from much that is tender, much that touches the heart, much that softens and blesses, because he will not open his senses to receive the gifts of his Maker.

III. Lastly, a man may be wanting in a sense of the justice of God's government. And perhaps for us imperfect creatures this is the most dangerous deficiency of all. Such a one generally shows his want by a weak desire to bury the past. He has no sense of a sin once done being a substantive thing tied inevitably to substantive consequences. And for this very reason he cannot feel any need for a Redeemer or a redemption. And so he never comes with a full acknowledgment of his guilt to the foot of the Cross, resigning soul and body to Him who alone can cleanse.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, p. 111.

Chap. vii., ver. 13.—"That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

I. WHAT is sin? Rebellion—the resistance of a human mind against the sovereignty of its Creator. It little matters, in comparison, what may be the act by which a rebel shows that he is a rebel; the fact is the important thing—that he is in a state of rebellion. Man measures sin by the degree of the injury which a sin inflicts on society, or upon the man who does it. God measures sin by the degree of the rebellion which He sees in that sin against Himself. What we call the sin is in His sight only the index of the sinfulness which lies deep down in the heart.

II. No sin is single, no sin is solitary, there are no islands in

sin. The principle of obedience is a single thing; the man that has broken one law has violated the principle of obedience, and therefore he is as much a breaker of the law as if he had broken a thousand things. Again, all God's law is one law. It resolves itself into one—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. He that hath done one sin did not love God; therefore by his want of love he has brought himself guilty to the count of all the law—for the law is love.

III. Every sin which a man does, lies in a series—in which that one sin is a link, and none can calculate what will be the chain of repetitions and the chain of consequences, which shall stretch on and on from sin to sin, from person to person, from circle to circle, from age to age—beyond time into eternity. The sins that we do very soon pass out of our memory, in the crowd of new and pressing engagements and thoughts which come around us; we perhaps very little realise now the sins which once pressed very heavily and were very vivid to our consciences. But with God's view each one sin is as green and fresh as at the moment when it was done. Let us try then to look on sin as God looks on it, and we shall better appreciate the infinite grace of Him who was made sin for us.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 319.

REFERENCES: vii. 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xix., No. 1095; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 71; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 103.

Chap. vii., vers. 14-25.

DUALISM in the Life.

I. This is the earliest place in this Epistle where the two terms "flesh and spirit" occur in clear contrast, with the peculiar ethical sense conferred upon them by one another. In the next chapter we find them in constant use, as the key words of his argument. The point of St. Paul here is that the law of God partakes of His own nature. It, too, is spiritual. It reflects the Divine character, for it expresses the Divine will, and therefore between it and the nature of man, as man now is, there holds precisely the same incompatibility which our Lord affirmed between what is born of the flesh and what is born of the spirit. In this sad closing picture of his own experience, even after his mind had become reconciled to the law, St. Paul has made himself a mirror in which men of earnest holiness and habits of self-scrutiny have in every age seen themselves reflected. Such an internal dualism—such a strife of opposites—such a

comparative impotency to realise the good they propose, are standing characteristics of saintliness, if we may judge saints by their most secret confessions and self-examinations.

II. St. Paul speaks of the law in his members as waging such successful war, that it even carried him off at times into captivity, like a prisoner of war. For the sinful principle which has its seat in an inborn disposition makes sudden sallies when a soul is off its guard, then leaps on with some gust of passion, and before it can gather itself up to resist it is swept forward by the unexpected pressure and is lost. So anger overtakes some, so lust others. Let us entreat God for a watchful temper. In Christ Jesus is a spirit of life. What the law never could do, because it was weak through the flesh, God has done in Christ. The Spirit whom we have received in Christ is the true answer to every "Who shall deliver?" Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 211.

REFERENCES: vii. 18.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 84; W. Ground, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 316; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 5th series, p. 115. vii. 19.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 364.

Chap. vii., ver. 20.

WHAT are the lessons of life which we have to deduce from the doctrine of original sin?

I. First, of course, there is that dependence on God's help, which we can never too often repeat to our hearts as our only stay. We have to learn not merely as an abstract truth but as a living fact, as a principle which will check and control, and yet uphold our hearts throughout the day, that we are in God's hands and not our own. We are not the real combatants in the great battle; rather our souls are the battle-field, and Christ and sin fight there for supremacy, and we can but surrender ourselves to one of the two. We are weak and helpless, except in as much as God may help us. If we would ask what are the tokens of our having learnt the lesson, the answer is, that besides the quiet trust in God, the chief token of our having learnt to lean on God, and not on ourselves, is the avoidance of all unnecessary temptation.

II. As on the one hand we learn our absolute dependence on God, so do we learn and get comfort in our Christian warfare. We learn that there is a sense in which we can, like the Apostle, disclaim our own faults and say as he did, "It is not I that do

it, but sin that dwelleth in me." In so far as we do not consent to our own faults, in so far they are not our own; in so far as we yield to them, they are ours. And God who is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things, can see when we have honestly striven, and assuredly will not deny His help in such a struggle.

III. We must not be disappointed, or cast down, or disheartened, because we find our self-improvement very much slower than we expect or like. The evil to be cured is past human remedy. God will cure it if we wish. But He will cure it in His own way, and at His own time. We must be content to fight the battle in His name and strength, and leave the issue in His hands.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, p. 122.

REFERENCES: vii. 21.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 262. vii. 21-5.—A. D. Davidson, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 458.

Chap. vii., vers. 22, 23.—"I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind."

VICTORY amid Strife.

I. There are, says an ancient father, four states of man. In the first, man struggles not, but is subdued; in the second, he struggles and is still subdued; in the third, he struggles and subdues; in the fourth, he has to struggle no more. The first state of heavy sluggish acquiescence in sin is man's condition when not under the law of God. The second, of a fruitless, ineffectual struggle, is his state under the law, but not with the fulness of Divine grace. The third, wherein he is in the main victorious, is under the full grace of the gospel. The fourth, of tranquil freedom from all struggle, is in the blessed and everlasting peace. Three of these states there are now. However any be under the power of grace, they, while in the flesh, must have conflict still. It would not be a state of trial without conflict. And this conflict is within, as well as without. This very condition of our being must be good for us, since God, after He has redeemed, regenerated, renewed us, has given us of His Spirit, and made us members of His Son, united us to Christ, and made us temples of the Holy Ghost, but still leaves more or less responsibility in those whom He willed to sit on His right hand and on His left in His kingdom.

II. This conflict is continual. It spreads through the whole life and through every part in man. Man is besieged on all sides. No power, no faculty, no sense, is free from this war-

fare. Every sense is tempted or tempts to sin; the law of sin is found, although by God's grace it reigns not, in all our members. But though the whole man is besieged thus within and without, his inward self, his life, his soul, where God dwells, whereby he is united to God, is hemmed in, but not overcome, unless his will consents. "Sin lieth at the door." The will holds the door closed; the will alone opens the door. If thou open not the door thyself, sin cannot enter in. Resist the very first motions. It is then that thou art most in thy own power. Be not weary of resisting, although the temptation come again and again. Each such resistance is an act of obedience to God; each, done by His grace, draws down more of His grace to thee; in each His good pleasure will the more rest upon thee; by each thou wilt become more a vessel of His grace and love, more fitted and enlarged for His everlasting love.

E. B. PUSEY, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 327.

REFERENCES: vii. 22, 23.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1062; A. P. Peabody, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 397.

Chap. vii., vers. 22-5.

I. WHEN a man begins to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and, discontented with himself, attempts to improve himself, he soon begins to find a painful truth in many a word of the Bible to which he gave little heed, as long as he was contented with himself and with doing just what pleased him, right or wrong. He soon finds out the meaning and the truth of that terrible struggle between the good in him and the evil in him, of which St. Paul speaks so bitterly in the text. How, when he tries to do good, evil is present with him. How he delights in the law of God with his inward mind, and yet finds another law in his body warring against the law of God, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin. How he is crippled by old habits, weakened by cowardice, by laziness, by vanity, by general inability of will, till he is ready—disgusted at himself and his own weakness—to cry, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

II. Let him but utter that cry honestly; let him once find out that he wants something outside himself to help him, to deliver him, to strengthen him, to stir up his weak will, to give him grace and power to do what he knows instead of merely admiring it and leaving it undone; let a man only find out that; let him see that he needs a helper, a deliverer, a strengthener, in one word a Saviour, and he will find one. Like

St. Paul, after crying "O wretched man that I am!" he will be able to answer himself, "I thank God—God will deliver me, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ will stir up this weak will of mine, Christ will give me strength and power, faithfully to fulfil all my good desires, because He Himself has put them into my heart—not to mock me, not to disappoint me, not to make me wretched with the sight of noble graces and virtues to which I cannot attain, but to fulfil His work in me."

C. KINGSLEY, *All Saints' Day*, p. 41.

REFERENCES: vii. 22-5.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. iii., p. 34. vii. 23.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1459. vii. 24.—*Good Words*, vol. iii., p. 445; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 37; C. J. Vaughan, *Lessons of the Cross and Passion*, p. 227.

Chap. vii., vers. 24, 25.

I. THE consciousness of sin is so far a universal fact of human nature, that if any one of us is without it, it is because of some disease and defect in his own mind. The conviction of sin may be stifled, nay, it is stifled every day, and yet it is universal as light is universal, although some may shut their eyes close and admit none of it; so is the consciousness of sin universal, although many believe that they have got rid of it altogether. For this very absence of conviction only proves the incompleteness of their nature. They deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them. They are sleeping steeped in cold mists and poisonous dews, but they know not the poison because they are asleep. Yet fire burns and poison destroys not the less, when the senses that are sentinels against them desert their posts. Every man whose nature is complete and awake and active knows that there is such a thing as sin and that he is a partaker in it.

II. In what does the consciousness of sin consist? It is the consciousness of division and strife within a man. His mind is not at peace with itself. In our pride we revolt against God, and all our inner thoughts start into rebellion against us. To-day, with its high hopes and promises, passes censure on to-morrow with its foolish outbreaks and lame performances. If we could add a little weight to our will, or abate but a little from the force of our temptations!—but as it is, the secret record of our lives would be a register of unfulfilled intentions.

III. Such a condition must be one of misery, out of which it is natural to try to escape, either by the door of deliverance opened to us by Christ in His gospel, or through the gates of

death and hell. And all these belong not to the nature of sin itself, but only to our consciousness of it. Let us remember that the Physician is close at hand, who will pour balm into our wounds, who will create a new heart and a new spirit within us.

ARCHBISHOP THOMSON, *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, p. 188.

REFERENCES: vii. 24, 25.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 235; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 313; J. Wells, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 5; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 347; *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 356; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 96. vii. 25.—*Good Words*, vol. iii., p. 447. viii. 1.—G. Moberly, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 157; *Three Hundred Outlines on the New Testament*, p. 128; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 420; vol. ii., p. 258; vol. vii., p. 113; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 44. viii. 1-4.—D. Bagot, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 125.

Chap. viii., vers. 1-11.

IN the verses before us three points are touched on regarding the gospel as God's power to sanctify. These are: (1) The preliminary work which had to be done by the coming of Christ, or the basis laid in the life and death of our Lord with a view to our being sanctified. Next, (2) wherein sanctification really consists; it is the substitution of God's Spirit as a source of moral influence in lieu of the congenital tendency or drift towards sin of our own nature. And (3) how this working of the Divine Spirit in a believer must issue in his complete revivification, or the victory of life over death both in soul and body. In other words, we have here the origin, the process, and the issue of a believer's sanctification in Christ.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 225.

REFERENCES: viii. 1-17.—*Homilist*, vol. i., p. 81. viii. 2.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 362; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 47. viii. 3.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 18; S. A. Tipple, *Sunday Mornings at Norwood*, p. 22. viii. 3, 4.—*Homilist*, vol. vii., p. 124; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 266. viii. 5.—W. Gladden, *Ibid.*, vol. xxv., p. 280. viii. 5, 6.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 187; M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation—No Separation*, p. 28. viii. 5-8.—H. D. Rawnsley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 100. viii. 5-11.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 306. viii. 6.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. ii., p. 315; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 191. viii. 6-8.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 148. viii. 7.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. ii., p. 90. viii. 7, 8.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 172; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. ii., p. 362.

Chap. viii., ver. 8.

MAN's Inability to Please God.

I. How comes it to pass that man in his natural state cannot please God? We reply that the very fact of our being creatures of God, as we undoubtedly are, places us under an irreversible obligation to consecrate our every power and talent to God, whether or not He may have issued any direct law to which He demanded obedience. Ours is not a case in which there could be debate as to the authority of the lawgiver, neither is it one in which submission may be refused without actual hostility. But who can think it a disputable point, whether a man whilst in the flesh, whilst in his natural state before conversion, submits himself to God's law? Who can be so ignorant of his own native tendencies as not to know that they impel him directly to what the law forbids and away from what the law requires?

II. An unconverted man may endeavour to conform himself to the precepts of his Maker, but there is something so distinct and contrary between that which is to obey and that which is to be obeyed, that the attempt will only issue in fresh proof of the alleged impossibility. It is not a slight change which passes over men when they are converted. Before conversion they are at enmity with God, in a state which makes the pleasing of God impossible, and it is come to pass, as the result of conversion, that they have a mind which is love toward God and which finds its great delight in keeping His commandments; and therefore we may well say that the change is not slight, not such as could take place without being felt or observed. If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature. We are born heirs of wrath, and we must undergo a great internal radical change before we can become heirs of glory.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2225.

REFERENCES: viii. 8.—M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation — No Separation*, p. 38. viii. 9.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. ii., p. 348; D. Ewing, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 299; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 281; vol. v., p. 274. viii. 9-11.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 471. viii. 10.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 131; J. Jackson, *Church Sermons*, vol. i., p. 185; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 31.

Chap viii., ver. 11.

THE Beginning of the Redemption of the Body Here.

I. The first point which it is needful to consider is the actual degeneracy of the body of man through his yielding it to the uses of sin. What might have been the condition of man's physical frame had Adam remained in a state of purity we

have no means of knowing. The human body under its present conditions of sleep, nourishment, and reproduction is manifestly but the temporary tent and workshop of the soul. The shadow which fell on the soul of Adam fell through his senses over all the world. There was a manifest degeneracy of the bodily life; and that was equivalent to the degeneracy of the world, and of all things with which he had to do.

II. Consider next the office of Christianity with regard to the human body, the beginning of the work of its redemption in this present world. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is set forth as the type and the pledge of the present quickening of the body of the believer. I say, a present quickening: it is not a future resurrection only, though that is plainly involved, but it is a present quickening of the body which is dead by sin to be alive by the Spirit unto God. Because of the Spirit and the life He brings, "He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in you." Let us trace the outline of the process. (1) The gospel establishes the true and sovereign principle of rule over the bodily passions and powers. (2) The indwelling Spirit gives new possession of the body and its powers. (3) The indwelling Spirit alone explains the organisation of man's body, and justifies its erectness. (4) The gospel completes its ministry by assuring to the body a share in the life and development of eternity. We are called here to reverence the body, and to work at its redemption, because this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and because this body shall stand crowned and robed in splendour before the eternal throne.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Divine Life in Man*, p. 214.

REFERENCES: viii. 11.—G. Calthrop, *Pulpit Recollections*, p. 147; M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation—No Separation*, p. 56. viii. 12.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 35. viii. 12-14.—*Ibid.*, p. 64; G. Moberly, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 201.

Chap. viii., vers. 12-16.

ST. PAUL is telling us here that there are two masters, either of whom we may serve, but one or other of whom we must serve. Christ is one, sin is the other. Christ is the Lord of our spirits. If we claim Him for our Lord and serve Him, then we must live as if we were spiritual beings, trusting, hoping, loving, holding our bodies in subjection; if we serve sin, then the body becomes the master, and the spirit dies; we eat and drink and sleep; faith, hope, and love perish. "But," says St. Paul, "it need not be so with any of us. Christ, the Lord of our spirits,

saw that the spirits of men were dead within them, that they were living as mere fleshly creatures, and He came down and lived on this earth and died on it, that He might deliver these spirits out of death, and bind them to Him."

I. You see, St. Paul declares that there is a spirit in every one of you. Every poor savage on the earth, who has never heard of a soul or of Christ, has strange thoughts within him; he cannot tell whence they have come or whither they are going. These thoughts that stir within us, these feelings and cravings and wants, which all the things that we see and hear do not satisfy, these are worth all the world to us if only we know to whom to carry them.

II. He, into whose name we are baptized, of whose death we are made partakers, He who died that our sin might die, who rose that our spirits might rise and live, He is still with us, the Lord of our spirits, still unchanged and unchangeable. Believing in Him, claiming that right in Him which He gave us in baptism, and which He has never withdrawn from us since claiming our union with Him who has died unto sin once, but who now dieth no more, for death hath no more dominion over Him, our spirits may shake themselves free from this oppressor who is holding them down. With our spirits we can trust in Him, with our spirits we can hope in Him, with our spirits we can rise up with Him, and ascend with Him, and reign with Him. And then if they have tasted this liberty, they would wish to enjoy it continually, and that they may do so they will desire to mortify the deeds of that body which has kept them from enjoying it and would keep them from enjoying it still. They will desire to give up their spirits, to be ruled by His spirit, to be filled by Him with all holy desires and good thoughts, and prompted to all just works.

F. D. MAURICE, *Christmas Day and Other Sermons*, p. 50.

Chap. viii., vers. 12-17.

FROM Present Life to Future Glory.

I. The leading of the Holy Spirit is no leading at all unless it be efficacious. If we are led by the Spirit, that means that to some extent we are day by day amending our ways, exerting ourselves successfully to do right, and making substantial progress in virtue.

II. Wherever you find submission to Divine guidance, you have evidence of a Divine truth. We have no other mark of

that sacred and lofty relationship, the noblest belonging to our nature, save character.

III. It on solid grounds a believer has made sure Paul's second arch in this brief bridge which spiritual logic builds from earth to heaven, then he is prepared to go on to the third and last, "If sons, then heirs."

J. OSWALD DYKES, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 237.

REFERENCES: viii. 13.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 20. viii. 13-21.—*Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 225. viii. 14.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 48; W. Hubbard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 65; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 113; M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation*, p. 71; S. Greg, *A Layman's Legacy*, p. 123. viii. 14, 15.—H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 1870, p. 280.

Chap. viii., ver. 15.—"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

THE Thought of God the Stay of the Soul.

I. The thought of God is the happiness of man; for though there is much besides to serve as subject of knowledge, or motive for action, or means of excitement, yet the affections require a something more vast and more enduring than anything created. He alone is sufficient for the heart who made it. We do not give our hearts to things irrational, because these have no permanence in them. We do not place our affections in sun, moon, and stars, or this rich and fair earth, because all things material come to nought and vanish like day and night. Man too, though he has an intelligence within him, yet in his best estate he is altogether vanity. If our happiness consists in our affections being employed and recompensed, "man that is born of a woman" cannot be our happiness, for how can he stay another who continueth not in one stay himself?

II. But there is another reason why God alone is the happiness of our souls; the contemplation of Him, and nothing but it, is able fully to open and relieve the mind, to unlock, occupy, and fix our affections. Created things cannot open us, or elicit the ten thousand mental senses which belong to us and through which we really live. None but the presence of our Maker can enter us, for to none besides can the heart in all its thoughts and feelings be unlocked and subjected. It is the feeling of simple and absolute confidence and communion which soothes and satisfies those to whom it is vouchsafed.

III. This sense of God's presence is the ground of the peace of a good conscience, and of the peace of repentance also. True

repentance cannot be without the thought of God; it has the thought of God, for it seeks Him; and it seeks Him, because it is quickened with love, and even sorrow must have a sweetness if love be in it.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. v., p. 313.

I. ADOPTION is that act whereby we are received into the family of God. We are none of us in God's family by nature. It is not a matter, properly speaking, of birth; but we are brought into it from without; literally we are adopted. Christ is the one Son of God. Into the Son God elects and engrafts members. He elects them everywhere, and He engrafts them just as He pleases; but they are all chosen from without and brought in. As soon as the union takes places between a soul and Christ God sees that soul in the relationship in which He sees Christ. He gives it a partnership in the same privileges—He treats it as if it were His own child—He gives it a place and name better than of sons and daughters. In fact, He has adopted it.

II. But this adoption, if it stood alone, would be no blessing. We cannot sufficiently admire the wisdom of the provision, and thank God for the manifestation of His grace, that wherever He gives adoption He follows it by the "Spirit of Adoption." The Spirit seals the union by making the affinity between the Creator and the creature close, happy, and eternal. The Spirit of Adoption cries "Father." A child does not ask a father as a stranger asks him. He does not want wages for his work, but he receives rewards. He does not want them; he works for another motive, and yet he does not know that he has another motive, for he never stops even to ask what his motive is. That "Spirit" has a present possession in the whole universe. All creation is his Father's house, and he can say, "Everything in it—everything that is great and everything that is little, everything that is happy and everything that is unhappy, every cloud and every sun-ray—all is Mine, even to death itself.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 130.

REFERENCES: viii. 15.—C. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, p. 216; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 276; D. Moore, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3217; M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation*, p. 80.

Chap. viii., ver. 16.

THE Evidence of Christian Sonship.

I. The evidence of sonship—its nature. In illustrating this there are two points to be considered—the ground on which

that evidence is founded; the manner in which it rises in the soul. In inquiring into the first of these let us carefully mark two things in Paul's words: (1) He draws a distinction between God's Spirit and our spirit: it is not our spiritual life that bears this testimony, it is the Spirit of God bearing witness to the soul; and (2) he implies by the whole contents of the chapter that the evidence is not fitful, but continued and progressive. Consider the manner in which the evidence of sonship rises in the soul. Paul speaks of the action of God's Spirit in three of its aspects, in each and all of which we see the way in which this evidence enters the soul. (1) Deliverance from the carnal. Freedom from this is the first sign of sonship. Here then is the witness when the old affections are being uprooted—a deep desire created after personal purity—when the chains of sin are snapped. (2) The spirit of prayer. Sometimes the Christian prayer transcends all words. The heart's wounded affections, blighted hopes, unexpressed longings—all burn in one deep, impassioned cry: this spirit of prayer possessing you is a sign of adoption. (3) The spirit of aspiration. This is a sign of sonship—life's imperfectness the ground of hope.

II. The necessity for this witness. Take Paul's words, and we shall find he brings out three great results of the witness of the Holy Ghost which show three reasons why every man should possess it. (1) We need it to enable us to enter into perfect communion with God; (2) we need it in order to realise our spiritual inheritance; (3) in order to comprehend the glory of suffering.

III. Its attainment. In order to acquire this witness, carry into action every spiritual power you possess—translate every emotion into life. Remember you have to work together with God. Take care that you grieve not the Holy Spirit. Feel that every point gained in spiritual life is a point to be maintained. Take care that when you are brought nearer to God by suffering, you do not allow yourself to fall back; if you do, the light of the Spirit will fade. "If then ye live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit."

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 294.

THE Witness of the Spirit.

I. Our cry "Father" is the witness that we are sons. Mark the terms of the passage: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit." It is not so much a revelation made to my spirit, considered as the recipient of the testimony, as a revelation made

in or with my spirit considered as co-operating in the testimony. The *substance* of the Spirit's evidence is the direct conviction based on the revelation of God's infinite love and fatherhood in Christ the Son, that God is my Father, from which direct conviction I come to the conclusion, the inference, the second thought, "Then I may trust that I am His son." The Spirit's testimony has for *form* my own conviction, and for *substance* my humble cry, "Oh thou my Father in Heaven."

II. That cry is not simply ours, but it is the voice of God's Spirit. Our own convictions *are* ours because they are God's. Our own souls possess these emotions of love and tender desire going out to God—our own spirits possess them, but our own spirits do not originate them. They are ours by property; they are His by source. Every Christian may be sure of this, that, howsoever feeble may be the thought and conviction in his heart of God's Fatherhood, he did not work it, he received it only, cherished it, thought of it, watched over it, was careful not to quench it; but in origin it was God's, and it is now and ever the voice of the Divine Spirit in the child's heart.

III. This Divine witness in our spirits is subject to ordinary influences which affect our spirits. The Divine Spirit, when it enters into the narrow room of the human spirit, condescends to submit itself, not wholly, but to such an extent as practically for our present purpose is wholly, to submit itself to the ordinary laws and conditions and contingencies which befall and regulate our own human nature. Do not think that the witness cannot be genuine because it is changeful. Watch it and guard it lest it change. Live in the contemplation of the Person and the fact that calls it forth, that it may *not*. To have the heart filled with the light of Christ's love to us is the only way to have the whole being full of light.

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons in Manchester*, 1st series, p. 54.

REFERENCES: viii. 16.—G. Huntingdon, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, p. 211; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 23; J. Brierley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 181; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 278; vol. viii., p. 91; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 133; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 10th series, p. 142; D. Moore, *Penny Pulpit*, Nos. 3184, 3187.

Chap. viii., ver. 17.—"If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

I. FIRST, the text tells us, No inheritance without sonship. In general terms, spiritual blessings can only be given to those who are in a certain spiritual condition. Always and necessarily the

capacity or organ of reception precedes and determines the bestowment of blessings. The light falls everywhere, but only the eye drinks it in. There is no inheritance of heaven without sonship; because all the blessings of that future life are of a spiritual character.

II. No sonship without a spiritual birth. The Apostle John in that most wonderful preface to his Gospel, where all deepest truths concerning the eternal Being in Himself and in the solemn march of His progressive revelations to the world are set forth in language simple like the words of a child, inexhaustible like the voice of a god, draws a broad distinction between the relation to the manifestations of God, which every human soul by virtue of his humanity sustains, and that which some, by virtue of their faith, enter into. Every man is lighted by the true Light because he is a man. They who believe in His name receive from Him the prerogative to become the sons of God. Those who become sons are not co-extensive with those who are lighted by the Light, but consist of so many of that greater number as receive Him, and that such become sons by a Divine act, the communication of a spiritual life, whereby we are born of God.

III. No spiritual birth without Christ. Christ comes to make you and me live again as we never lived before; live possessors of God's love; live tenanted and ruled by a Divine Spirit; live with affections in our hearts which *we* never could kindle there; live with purposes in our souls which *we* never could put there. There is but one Being that can make a change in our position in regard to God, and there is but one Being that can make the change by which man shall become a new creature.

IV. No Christ without faith. Unless we are wedded to Jesus Christ by the simple act of trust in His mercy and His power, Christ is nothing to us. Christ is everything to him that trusts Him. Christ is nothing but a judge and a condemnation to him that trusts Him not.

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons in Manchester*, 1st series, p. 68.

Chap. viii., ver. 17.—"Joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

I. SONSHIP with Christ necessarily involves suffering with Him. This is not merely a text for people that are in affliction, but for all of us. It does not merely contain a law for a certain part of life, but it contains a law for the whole of life. It is the inward strife and conflict in getting rid of evil, which the Apostle designates here with the name of suffering with Christ,

that we may be also glorified together. On this high level and not on the lower one of the consideration that Christ will help us to bear outward infirmities and afflictions, do we find the true meaning of all that Scripture teaching that says indeed, "Yes, our sufferings are His," but lays the foundation of it in this, "His sufferings are *ours*."

II. This community of suffering is a necessary preparation for the community of glory. God puts us to the school of sorrow, under that stern tutor and governor here, and gives us the opportunity of suffering with Christ, that by the daily crucifixion of our own nature, by the lessons and blessings of outward calamities and changes, there may grow up in us a still nobler and purer and perfecter Divine life; and that we may so be made capable—more capable, and capable of more—of that inheritance for which the only necessary thing is the death of Christ, and the only fitness is faith in His name.

III. That inheritance is the necessary result of the suffering that has gone before. The suffering results from our union with Christ. That union must needs culminate in glory. The inheritance is sure because Christ possesses it now. Trials have no meaning unless they are means to an end. The end is the inheritance; and sorrows here, as well as the Spirit's work here, are the earnest of the inheritance. The measure of the distance from the farthest point of our darkest earthly sorrow *to* the throne may help us to the measure of the closeness of the bright, perfect, perpetual glory above, when we are *on* the throne; for if so be that we are sons, we *must* suffer with Him; if so be that we suffer, we *must* be glorified together.

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons in Manchester*, 1st series, p. 82.

REFERENCES: viii. 17.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 48; M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation*, pp. 95, 103; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 135. viii. 18.—H. Wace, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 49; Fletcher, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 221 viii. 18-21.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 27.

Chap. viii., vers. 18-22.

THE Groans of Creation.

I. In trying to understand the several voices which make up this chorus of expectation, we must commence with the dumb companion of our hope, the physical creation.

II. Deep in the constitution of our present earth, and continuous along its whole past history, I think we may trace the subjection of all its animated beings to a law of vanity. We are in a world which has not yet attained, neither is already

perfect, but which yearns and labours in the hope to produce what shall be better than itself.

III. Christ has been delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the Son of God. In His deliverance is contained a pledge of that for which nature groaning waits. The original conditions under which our world was placed and has been kept so long become intelligible when we see that the world, like man, is a redeemed world, on its way to share in the splendid destiny to which Christ conducts redeemed humanity.

J. Oswald Dykes, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 246.

References: viii. 18-23.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. iv., p. 154. viii. 18-27.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 395. viii. 19, 20.—W. C. E. Newbolt, *Counsels of Faith and Practice*, p. 134.

Chap. viii., vers. 19-21.—"The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God," etc.

The Freedom of the Regenerate Will.

The plain meaning of this text is, that the whole world, conscious of its disinheritance, is crying aloud for the Spirit of adoption, which is even now about to be shed abroad. The nations are teeming with gifts of secret grace which shall be gathered and compacted, by the power of a new birth, into the mystical body of Christ; they are waiting and breaking forth in impatient desire for the message of life which the Father gave to His Son, and His Son has given unto us, that out of that dark waste shall spring up sons and saints of God. "He will destroy the face of the covering and the vail that is spread over all nations," and the powers of the regeneration and of the resurrection shall work throughout mankind, casting forth the first and the second death and healing the wounds of all creatures. The great gift of the gospel in our regeneration is spiritual liberty, that is, the true freedom of the will.

I. Consider how deep a degradation sin is—above all, in the regenerate. The hatefulness of sin is hardly more appalling than its shame. There is no slavery so great as that of a will which has broken the yoke of Christ, and become, by its own free choice, the servant of its own sinful inclinations; for the will itself is in bondage to its own lusts. Sometimes they appear under forms that the world admires, and become, every one, masters to whom we abandon the glorious liberty of the children of God. There is something very melancholy in the abject and eager servility with which men obey their hard

commands; sacrificing health, peace, freshness of heart, conscience, the light of God's presence, the very soul of their spiritual life. They enter again insensibly into the bondage of corruption, and groan under the burden which weighs on them more heavily day by day.

II. We may learn, next, how great is the misery of an inconsistent life. It forfeits the true grace of Christian obedience. To be religious from mere sense of necessity, that is, against our will, is a contradiction and a yoke. It is much to be feared that many whose lives are pure, who appear devout in all the outward usages of the Church, serve God with a heart that has no *pleasure* in obedience. Their free will is given to another, and it is but a constrained homage they render to Christ. The glorious liberty of the children of God turns to a forced, necessary observance of commandments. They are under a law, and have retrograded in the scale of spiritual perfection; from sons, they have turned back again to be servants; and their whole temper of heart towards God is infected by a consciousness of indevotion and of a lingering, undutiful will. It is because we do not realise the blessedness and the power of a free will; because we will not do God's will as sons, out of a loving and glad obedience, therefore we cannot stand against the world. It takes us captive and puts out our eyes, and sets us blinded to the mill to labour in darkness, in an involuntary and shameful servitude.

H. G. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 114.

REFERENCES: iii. 19-22.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 186; J. Owen, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 376.

Chap. viii., vers. 19-23.

I. THE groaning creation. We are surrounded by the evidences of a conflicting existence, a state of being—not all evil, certainly; certainly not all of God. All things about us show the wrestlings of two orders of things—two orders of spirits, who find on our earth their battle-ground and arena of conflict. "The whole creation groaneth." Time is the great school of suffering, and life is the great teacher. My text points me to a suffering world, but this is God's pathway to restitution. Christianity associates Divine ends and aims with suffering and my text points to them.

II. The earnest expectation. All the agitations of the world are the earnest of its need of rest. All things are in their prison or their grave, and beauty blooms only as the plant of a southern clime might bloom in Iceland. And what foundation

has the groaning world for its expectant waiting for a time of restitution? The foundation is in the fact that the ransom has been paid and peace has been proclaimed to a revolted universe. We have heard in the groans of creation the tones of wailing over the fall of man, and in this restitution there is a threefold blessing: (1) There is reconciliation; (2) by that reconciliation Scripture assures us that the salvation of all mankind is made possible and the salvation of an immense multitude is certain; (3) this reconciliation was effected by one Mediator, and by one only, even our Redeemer Jesus Christ.

III. To that hour of restitution all things are pointing. What is our Lord doing now in His high and holy place? He is *expecting* till His enemies become His footstool; looking out, looking forward. There is no ignorance implied in this, but a pausing until the fulness of the time shall come. No, from His intercessory throne, while He takes an interest in His friends, He is expecting. The turpitude and the crime of His enemies will only be His threshold to more illustrious and exalted power. He beholds all the hosts of evil tramping on their mad and foredoomed way. He is expecting till—they become His footstool.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Sermons*, p. 249.

REFERENCES: viii. 19-23.—M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation*, p. 171 viii. 19-25.—E. Johnson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii. p. 177. viii. 20.—C. J. Vaughan, *Words of Hope*, p. 221; *Homilist*, new series, vol. ii., p. 350. viii. 20-22.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 122. viii. 21.—*Homilist*, vol. vii., p. 123; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 345; Parker, *City Temple*, vol. i., p. 62; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 334.

Chap. viii., vers. 22, 23.

GROANS of Unrenewed and Renewed Nature.

I. All things bear about them strange tokens of good and evil. Each pictures to us some part of the glory of their Maker, each of our vanity. They minister to us, only by their corruption; they live, only to die. Seeds grow not, but by perishing; when grown they are our food through their destruction. Flowers turn not to fruit but by the fading of their glory. All seems to toil, all changes, all decays, all, in one weary and restless round, seem to say, "We abide not for ever, here is not thy rest." The creature, then, is subject to vanity, through outward decay; itself perishable, and serving to perishable ends.

II. But more! It was all formed "very good" to its Maker's praise; and now, through which hath He not been dishonoured?

If beautiful, man loves and admires it without or more than God, or worships it instead of Him. If any bring outward evil, man on occasion of it murmurs against its Maker. All around us and in us bears sad tokens of the Fall. As then to us death is to be the gate of immortality and glory, so in some way to them. Whence Holy Scripture says elsewhere, "The earth shall wax old like a garment"; and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner. As then we, so many as are in Christ, perish not utterly, but put off only corruption, to be, by a new and immortal birth, clothed with incorruption, so also they.

III. The taste of heavenly things kindles but the more burning thirst to have them. How is it that we have so few of these heavenly longings? In two ways is the longing for God attained, and neither will avail without the other. First, unlearn the love of self and of the world and of its distractions; secondly, contemplate God, His lovingkindness and His promised rewards. Dedicate, morning by morning, the actions of the day to God; live in His presence, do things or leave them undone, not simply because it is right or kind, much less according to mere natural temper, but to God. If we make God our end, He who gave us the grace thus to seek Him will give us His love; He will increase our longing desire for Him; and whom in all we seek, whom in all we would please, whom in all we would love, Him shall we find, Him possess, here in grace and veiled, hereafter in glory.

E. B. PUSEY, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 304.

REFERENCES: viii. 22, 23.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 193; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 94; W. J. Keay, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 340; A. C. Tait, *Church Sermons*, vol. i., p. 305.

Chap. viii., ver. 23.

THE Aspirations of a Christian Soul.

Consider:—

I. The nature of Christian aspirations. There are two points to be illustrated here. (1) The fact that the firstfruits of the Spirit are groaning for our full adoption. The Spirit reveals to us our adoption (*a*) by revealing the love of God, (*b*) by the gift of spiritual power, (*c*) by the gift of Divine peace. (2) The groaning reaches to a prayer for the redemption of the body. The power of the body to perpetuate the influences of past sin renders it an awful hindrance to the man who feels the firstfruits of the Spirit of God. And thus it is that we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit must incessantly cry for the redemption

of the body from its weakness and pain and evil, because we know that until then we can never reach the heavenly love and power and blessedness which belong to us as sons of God.

II. Their prophetic hopes. I say "prophetic" advisedly; for in the term "firstfruits" Paul has distinctly implied that these aspirations are not mere dreams, but real prophecies—not fanciful expectations, but actual foreshadowings of the beauty and blessedness that shall be when God makes perfect the redeemed. (1) We hope for the redeemed body; for as we said just now, the body is the grand hindrance to the aspirations of the soul. And now mark the prophetic cries which lie hid in that hope. Because it is a firstfruit of the Spirit, it foretells that every bodily power shall come forth, not crushed, but made stronger and brighter from the touch of death. (2) We hope for the redeemed world. Paul in the context has dared to affirm that the pain and death of the creature form one loud prophetic wail for the redemption of the earth. Take then your hopes, and believe that in their highest intensity they are literally prophetic of the age when the new Jerusalem shall come down from God like a bride adorned for her husband.

III. Their present lessons. (1) We need them all. The very loftiest of these aspirations are absolutely needful to guard us against the very lowest and meanest of the temptations of the everyday world. (2) We must live them all. If we simply treasure them in the soul as beautiful feelings, and do not strive to carry their influence into life, they will fade; for every aspiration which has not practical power is absolutely injurious to a man's spirit, and destined to wither into an idle sentiment.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 234.

REFERENCES: vii. 23.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 92; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 6th series, p. 253; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, pp. 176, 231, 341.

Chap. viii., vers. 23-7.

WAITING in Hope.

I. The unintelligent creatures wait, but not in hope. They travail as in pain with the burden of a future birth, of which they themselves are ignorant. We know what we wait for. The sons of God possess already an earnest of their coming inheritance.

II. Sober this hope of Christian men in the final regeneration of all things may always be; confident it should be, for it is built on Divine facts. But how seldom can it reach a buoyant

or cheerful tone! But the Christian, oppressed with the world's load, is not alone at his solitary prayers. A mystic comrade is near, who tempers the natural cry of one in pain into dutiful and gracious submission, and above another Paraclete or Intercessor, who likewise, touched with the feeling of our infirmity, makes prayer for us in His own name on high.

J. Oswald Dykes, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 256.

Chap. viii., ver. 24.—"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"

Eternal Life.

I. "We are saved by hope," says St. Paul: "but hope that is seen is not hope." This is the great contrast which runs through the New Testament. Indeed, scientific proof is just what, in the very nature of the case, religion does not admit of. What we mean by scientific proof is the verification, by event or experiment, of some calculation or reasoning or interpretation of facts, which has pointed to some particular conclusion, but not as yet actually reached it. Before this verification there is a direction in which things plainly go, a disposition of facts one way, but there is only probability; after, and by this verification, there is certainty. To have scientific proof of a future state is to have found out by having died and actually passed into that state and found yourself in it, that the reasoning on which you had previously in life expected and looked forward to that state was correct reasoning, and that you had made a true prophecy. But this proof, in the nature of the case, we cannot have now.

II. There is one great distinction between the current probabilities of life and the expectation of a future state. The probabilities of life pass in rapid succession into their state of either verification or falsification; they do not, for the most part, keep us long waiting: when it is evening, we say it will be fair weather, for the sky is red; and in the morning we say it will be foul weather, for the sky is red and lowering; the morning soon fulfils or refutes the presage of the evening, and the evening soon refutes or fulfils the prognostic of the morning. It is the same with respect to the transactions of life. But the great prophecy of reason has not yet received its verification. A future life is not proved by experiment. Generation after generation have gone to their graves, looking for the morning of the resurrection; the travellers have all gone with their faces set eastward, and their eyes turned to that eternal

shore upon which the voyage of life will land them. But from that shore there is no return; none come back to tell us the result of the journey; there is no report, no communication made from the world they have arrived at. No voice reaches us from all the myriads of the dead to announce that the expectation is fulfilled, and that experiment has ratified the argument for immortality.

III. It is forgotten, in the charge of self-interestedness against the motive of a human life, that this motive is not only a desire for our happiness, but a desire, at the same time, for our own higher goodness. The two wishes are essentially bound up together in the doctrine of a future state, as not only a continuation of existence, not only an improvement in the circumstances of existence, but as an ascent of existence. In the Christian doctrine of a future state we have this remarkable conjunction, that the real belief in the doctrine goes together with, and is fastened to, the moral sublimity of the state. In the pagan doctrine both of these were absent; the life itself was poor, shadowy, and sepulchral on the one hand, and the belief in it was feeble and volatile on the other. In the Christian doctrine both are present together, the glorious nature of life itself and the reality of the belief in it. Besides, the desire for immortality is not a lonely one; no human being ever desired a future life for himself alone; he wants it for all for whom he entertains an affection here; all the good whom he has known, or whom he has only heard of. Christianity knows nothing of a hope of immortality for the individual alone, but only of a glorious hope for the individual in the Body in the eternal society of the Church triumphant.

J. B. MOZLEY, *University Sermons*, p. 46.

REFERENCES: viii. 24.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 115; *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 121; *Ibid.*, vol. xi., p. 193; *Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 301; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 93; A. Murray, *The Fruits of the Spirit*, p. 323; G. Litting, *Thirty Children's Sermons*, p. 213; E. Bickersteth, *Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 129; M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation*, p. 135.

Chap. viii., ver. 26.

THE Spirit the Help to Prayer.

The highest gift of God is that which is for all alike. We need the Spirit for all the works we have to do. We can speak no true, honest, sound word unless we ask Him to teach us what we shall say and how we shall say it.

I. What are we to do when we feel as if we could not pray? as if that were the greatest difficulty of all? It is the Spirit who helps us, not only to think and to do, but also to pray—who draws out our desires towards God, who speaks more for us and in us than we know. It is very wonderful, but yet it must be so. We could not pray if God Himself were not stirring up prayer in us. It is not we who first seek for fellowship with Him; He seeks to have fellowship with us. The children begin to ask for their Father because the Father has been first seeking His children.

II. Is it not a blessed thought that the Spirit is uttering His groans for the deliverance of this world of ours from all its sin and slavery and wretchedness? Should we not rejoice that God knows what is the mind of the Spirit, for it is His own mind? Should we not trust, with all our hearts, that His will should at last be done on earth even as it is in heaven? And do not think that those who have prayed that prayer here on earth pray it less fervently when they leave the earth. Then their tongues are loosed; then they can pray for us and all their friends fighting here below, as God's Spirit would have them pray; then they begin to know that no prayer or groan that has been uttered in the lowliest chamber or in the darkest dungeon shall be in vain. God's Spirit inspired these prayers and groans, and His new heaven and new earth will be the answer to them.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons in Country Churches*, p. 80.

REFERENCES: viii. 26.—*Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 410; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 12; W. Harris, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 320; J. Silcox, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxii., p. 104; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 9th series, p. 296; D. Moore, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3149; M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation*, p. 122; F. Paget, *Anglican Pulpit of To-day*, p. 447; T. Birkett Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 27; G. Brooks *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 217.

Chap. viii., vers. 26, 27.

THE Intercession of the Spirit.

I. We have here the reality of prayer confirmed. Paul was a man of truth and soberness, free from superstition and fanatical weakness. He knew of what he was speaking, and he was sure that the Romans would know it too. It was for no inner circle of enthusiasts he was writing here, but for all that were in Rome, called to be saints. The Church in the metropolis, the busy, active society of Rome, is bidden. Mark the care God takes to help the infirmities and educate the

spirit of His children. Those prayers of yours, He is saying, are oftentimes the truest and devoutest in which you can say nothing. Feeling and desire—in these, as well as in thought and purpose, God can recognise the spirit of the worshipper.

II. The Divine origin of these unutterable longings is here confirmed. Consider the solemn blessedness of these words: "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." In the solemn hour of prayer, on which our life and activity so much depends; when, as we ask we receive, and if we ask not we receive not; in the solemn hour of prayer, that leaves us refreshed and strengthened, or wearied and yet more perplexed; in the solemn hour of prayer, when we are desiring from God what shall be the bane or blessing of many days, we cannot dispense with the Spirit's intercession.

III. God fully understands the meaning of these longings that are not fully understood by the subject of them. In the unutterable cry for God, He reads a desire for communion with Him fuller than has yet been satisfied. In the struggle of the soul that knows not "what to pray for as we ought," in the shaking sobs of him who is torn by distracting feelings between personal wishes and the feeling that there may be something higher and nobler far than these, He recognises the spirit striving to conquer the weakness of the flesh, the passion for submission, however hard it may be to submit.

A. MACKENNAL, *Christ's Healing Touch*, p. 203.

I. WHAT is prayer? (1) Look upon it as grounded upon the office and work of our adorable Saviour. It is not merely feeling, earnestness, fluency of utterance, confession of sin and want. It is the eye fixed upon the blood and the High Priest. We come boldly to the throne of grace, because we have a great High Priest before the mercy seat. (2) But there is another view of prayer, connected with the work of the Spirit. The quickening power of this Divine agent brings life into the soul and life into our prayer. It is not the exercise of any particular grace, but the combined energy of all. Confidence is linked with humility, contrition, love; all the meek and lowly fruits, so adorning, so necessary to the completeness of Christian consistency, find their place here when the heart is poured out before the mercy seat. And yet what a mass of infirmities! Look at—

II. The matter of our prayers. We know not what to pray for. Left to ourselves we are as likely to be ruined by our

prayers as the ungodly by the neglect of prayer Yet we are not left here in despondency. We are led to mark –

III. Our assistance in prayer. Great as our infirmities are, our assistance is fully equal to meet them. We have not only an Almighty Surety, but an Almighty Supporter. The blessed Spirit of God condescends to our need, and brings abundant supply, apart from all other sources of encouragement. (1) He excites in us intense desires, groanings unuttered and unutterable —perhaps too big for utterance—desire venting itself in sighs. Nothing but experience can explain this exercise. It is the warmth, life, and vigour of prayer. It is the breathing of Divine supplication, as if the Spirit of God was joining His own soul with ours. (2) Again we observe this Divine help in moulding these unutterable desires in subjection to the will of God. Never are we likely to receive a blessing unless we are willing to go without it.

IV. The acceptance of prayer. Often we do not thoroughly know it. But not a breath is lost before God. When the fire seems to go out, have we never found the living spark underneath the heap of embers? And so does the great Searcher see under this mass the spark of His own kindling—the mind of His own Spirit. So does He spell out the ill-printed letters, the disordered and confused matter, and brings them out to be the desires framed by His own Spirit making intercession—moulding them to His own will.

C. BRIDGES, *Family Treasury*, Dec., 1861.

Chap. viii., vers. 26, 27.—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered," etc.

THE word "likewise" with which my text begins institutes a comparison between what is set forth in the text and what had been said before. To grasp this comparison fully we must go back to the eighteenth verse. The Apostle there sets out with a declaration, the peculiar wording of which is meant to show that he is speaking, not with the exaggeration of eloquent appeal or excited feeling, but with the sobriety of simple and deliberate calculation. "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us hereafter." Yet few men have had richer experience of the sufferings of the present life than Paul. The thought to which the word "likewise" in my text goes

back is this. Creation, so far as we are concerned with it, sympathises with us, but its sympathy is unavailing; it cannot aid us: on the contrary, the aid is to come from us to it; it looks to our deliverance as the beginning of its own. We want, therefore, something else. We want a sympathy not merely of weak creature fellow-feeling, but of powerful creative aid, and this sympathy my text sets forth. "Likewise," in like manner, but with far different result, "the Spirit also" not merely sympathises with us, but "helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." The effectual, omnipresent sympathy of the third Person in the ever-blessed Trinity is the wondrous fact which these words disclose.

I. This is, perhaps, one of the deepest, as it is surely one of the most comforting passages in Holy Writ. It takes us at once into those dark mysteries of self-consciousness, hidden from all others, half hidden even from ourselves, clear to none but our Creator, which go down to the foundations of our being, nay, to the very depths of the Being and operation of God Himself. For we can, indeed, easily conceive the impossibility of clearly knowing at every instant what we ought to pray for other than in the most general terms. We can also, and still more easily, conceive the impossibility of knowing how to pray as we ought; we all experience it. The wandering of the mind, the listlessness, the absolute blank of thought and feeling which sometimes seems to engulf it when we kneel down to pray; the mere unconnected rhapsodical ejaculations in which the most fervent prayer, like the celebrated ecstasy of Pascal, so often loses itself. All these are so many instances of the not knowing how to pray. The mind sinks in the attempt to rise to God. And so, too, with our ignorance of what we ought to ask. Prayer is the desire of man laid before his Maker. But what shall we desire? Knowledge of His truth in this world, in the world to come life everlasting, seem pretty nearly to exhaust all we are sure we ought to ask. Yet, were our prayers always limited to these two simple but sublime petitions, should we not feel as though much was omitted? True, we can have no knowledge of God's truth unless we have the will to do it: a pure heart is therefore implicitly involved in this petition: and a pure heart, again, involves a right conscience in all the affairs of life; but these things, however sweeping, are things we have or seek to have in common; they are general, not individual needs. Each of us has his own station,

his own position, his own character and constitution, mental and bodily; each one of us has, more or less, abused that position, that character, that constitution; each, therefore, has his own burden, known, beyond himself, to God alone. All these differences demand different treatment in each individual case; each has, in consequence, his own individual difficulties. The effort of prayer must be made much in the dark. We know not what to pray for any more than we know how. And here comes in the full comfort of my text. For, strange and paradoxical as it may sound, it is here that the Divine and human seem to touch; on this borderland of ignorance and powerlessness they meet. For though the Spirit Himself helpeth our infirmities by interceding for us when we know neither what to ask nor how, it is only by groans or sighs inarticulate and unutterable, beyond all language to express, beyond all thought distinctly to conceive.

II. Many, perhaps I ought to say most, Christians do not really believe the presence of the Holy Spirit in themselves, because of the imperfections of which they are conscious. They cannot take to themselves the things of God in all their fulness because they intimate things so far transcending their own condition and feeling, that they think it impossible they should really apply to them in their literal sense. The comfort which this deep and wondrous passage is meant to give resides not merely in the statement that the Spirit does actually help our infirmities by pleading for us, but in the assurance that the imperfection of our present state and progress, of our religious experience, in a word, need be no bar to our thankfully believing that we, too, have the Spirit, since the Spirit dwelling in each shares, so to speak, our imperfection; limits Himself by the capacities of each, accommodates Himself to the character of each. Let us not deny the Christ that liveth in us, because that life is hid even from ourselves with Christ in God. Let us not ignore the Spirit that dwelleth in us, because we do not as yet see all things conquered by Him, all our thoughts pervaded by Him; remember that if there is but one good aspiration, one wish to do and be that which is right and pleasing to God; one upward look, one sign of the heart and mind to that infinite and eternal Good which alone can satisfy, we have evidence of the Divine existing in us, since it is of His alone that we can give unto Him; since without His Spirit we could neither desire nor conceive beyond the circle of those earthly things within which our earthly life is banned and confined. Solemnise,

then, and purify, as well as cheer, your hearts and minds with these thoughts. It would seem that in all God's universe there is no being, after God, so august as man, because no other being's nature did God take in the person of His Son, in no other being does God vouchsafe to dwell by His Spirit. Lift up your hearts, then, to that state, that place, that presence which alone are adequate to the wants and desires we feel within us; and as you lift them up to the Eternal and to that heaven of heavens which yet cannot contain Him, take courage, and learn endurance from the thought that the Spirit Himself helpeth our infirmities, ever making intercession for us out of the depths of His own being with sighs and plaints that cannot indeed be uttered, and must for ever remain unknown to us, but which are perfectly understood by Him to whom they ascend, because it is according to His own will that the Spirit thus maketh intercession for all who are dedicated unto Him.

C. P. REICHEL, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, p. 883.

THE Intercession of the Spirit in Prayer.

I. The necessity for a Divine inspirer of prayer. (1) To ask rightly we must realise the solemnity of asking. We utter our little thought to the Everlasting thought—our poor cry to the Sustainer of the worlds. To feel this is profoundly difficult. We are such slaves to the visible and the apparent. But when touched by the Divine Spirit, we rouse all the powers of our being to realise the Divine presence as an overwhelming reality —not a cold faith in the mere existence of the Deity, but the conviction that He is the sublime reality before which all visible things are shadows—that He is a presence nearer to us than friend or brother—a presence in actual contact with our spirits. (2) To ask rightly we must ask with persevering earnestness. We ought always to pray and not to faint. Do we verily believe God will hear us, and do we pray as though He were hearing? When we possess the abiding spirit of prayer, when the whole aspect of the spirit's life is *seeking*, then will our direct petitions have a power that amid all hindrances shall persevere.

II. The manner of the Spirit's inspiration. (1) The awakening of inexpressible emotion "with groanings that cannot be uttered." All deep emotions are too large for language—they outsoar the narrow range of human speech. (2) The certainty of Divine response. We dare not ask absolutely for any particular blessing, but the Spirit inspires the cry "Thy will be done," and the right blessings are given. God alters not His order,

and because He alters it not we win blessings by spiritual prayer which would not have been bestowed without it.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 1.

REFERENCES: viii. 26, 27.—M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation*, p. 197. viii. 27.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 145.

Chap. viii., ver. 28.—"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

I. ST. PAUL believes that there is a purpose, an end, towards which events are tending. It looks at first sight like a faith rather than the conclusion of an argument. Reason alone, it has been said, might arrive at an opposite conclusion. How can we see a providential guidance, a Divine plan of any kind, in the bloody game which chiefly makes up history? How can we trace it in the conduct of generations, of races, who successively appear upon the surface of this planet to make trials one after another of the same crude experiments, as if the past had furnished no experience with which to guide them? It is true enough that the purpose of God in human history is traversed —that it is obscured—by causes to which the apostles of human despair may point very effectively; and yet here, as ever, we Christians dare to say that we walk by faith where sight fails us, as elsewhere, and we see enough to resist so depressing a conclusion as that before us—to know that the course of events is not thus fatal, thus desperate. "All things work together for good."

II. By "good" the Apostle does not mean material, visible prosperity. Success in life is not linked to the love of God even in the majority of cases. The good of which the Apostle is speaking is real, absolute, eternal good. It is the good of the soul rather than of the body. It is the good of the eternal world rather than of the present world. It may be that a man's circumstances have no very marked character one way or another. It may be that they are a tissue of crushing misfortunes. It may be that they are a succession of conspicuous successes. The love of God is the magician which extracts the ore alike from each, and which makes each and all promote man's final, man's absolute good. No life whatever is made up of such commonplaces that each cannot be made, by this love, to sparkle with the very highest moral interest. No misfortunes are so great that they cannot be built into the very steps of the staircase by which souls mount up to heaven.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 647

How are we to regard this certitude of the Apostle? Must we not look upon it as a rational conviction, strengthened and confirmed by an experience ample, varied, and wonderful; established by a faith in the Christian verities, and made immovable by the spiritual visions of a heart disciplined by trial and purified by affliction? And this is a certitude open to us all, if we seek it; for though it may seem impossible to our reason, it is easy of attainment to the obedience of faith, and yet faith is not blind. Let us contemplate the source of its light, that our reason be not confounded at the confidence of our heart.

I. All things are at work and subject to constant change. The fact is obvious. Ceaseless change conditions everything on earth. And what an air of sadness this self-evident fact gives to our life! As years wear on confidence becomes broken, expectation lessens, hope declines, a trust in creatures is found to be vain, a feeling of insecurity steals over us, which denies us peace, and so fills the mind with fear of foreboded evil, that even in laughter the heart is sad.

II. All things work together. The addition of this one word alters everything. It introduces design where there appeared to be no aim, order where all seemed chaos, and a matured plan where there seemed no purpose; so that now "nothing walks with aimless feet." Everything has its appointed way, occupies a given place, and exercises a prepared and regulated influence. The Divine purpose embraces all. They are but spheres and co-operative agencies carrying out the one purpose which runs through all ages. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things," "Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

III. But to what purpose, to what end do all things work together? Our text answers, "All things work together *for good.*" This is no mere conjecture, nor simply the assertion of an inspired apostle, but a necessary deduction from the fact we have been considering. If all things work together, then good *must* be the result. For evil has no power of co-operation. Evil elements cannot be combined, they are antagonistic to each other. The way of goodness carries its security, for the attainment of its end, in its own moral power. The purpose of goodness cannot fail of accomplishment, for the true nature of everything is in accordance with the will, the way, and the work of God. But evil is vanity, and the way of evil a vain show, and the end less than nothing, and vanity.

IV. But if all things work together for good, then also for the best. Divine goodness has but one end for the same creature, and that is the best possible. His mind can only purpose the best in relation to the creature concerned. And to reach this end He has but one way, and that is the best. Science knows that there is but one way of doing anything truly, just as there is but one straight line between two points. How impossible, then, that the only wise God should have for His children any end or any way to that end but the best!

V. But for whom will this co-operation of all things work out its highest good? "For those that love God." The highest good can only be received by rightly directed affections. Only love can take up the issue of this universal co-operation, which is working out what the eternal love has purposed.

W. PULSFORD, *Trinity Church Sermons*, p. 93.

I. "ALL things." We may say literally and without exception all things; for there is a sense in which a human being is related to everything. He is related supremely to God, and by that relation he touches the whole universe. There is a strain of truth as well as a lofty tone of poetry in that old war hymn which makes the stars in their courses fight against Sisera. All things, high and low, fight for or against a man continually. But probably the "all things" here meant are those things which more nearly and constantly affect men. There are things which gather round each person; things which are distributed over the field of his life; things which touch him so immediately, that they give him daily help or daily hindrance as the case may be.

II. "All things work together." That explains, in a considerable measure, the great changes that take place, and the great progress that is sometimes made very quickly. Things work together. A man is over-matched sometimes by the weight and pressure of the things he has to do, when a new circumstance occurs, a new thing is born, and as it were instantly yokes itself into harness with the rest, and the object is attained. All things work together, not in an aimless and capricious manner, for this end and that, now in one way and now in another, as though a stream should one day flow seawards and the next back towards its fountain among the hills, but in one volume, along one channel, in one direction, towards one end. Everything is held as in one despotic bond, and gathered up and hurried along the one inevitable channel.

III. The greatest question in life to a man is this, "Of what

character is the supreme influence of all the things which work together in my life? I am being educated—in what nurture? I am being moved forward to something—what is that something? I am growing—in whose image, and towards the measure of what stature?" The true test is this, "Is there love to God?" It is not, "Am I strong enough to vanquish or successfully resist the forces of life?" because no man is nor ever will be. To say nothing of the buffetings that must come and the changes to which the most obstinate must yield, there is to each at last, and to one as much as to another, the grand defeat—every man, soon or late, is laid on the bed of death, is buried in the grave. The question is this, and no other, "Do I love God?" What we love, or rather, whom we love, and how much, will tell far more regarding our inward state, our real character, than anything else in the whole circle of our experience, will therefore also tell what moral position we occupy in relation to all outward things. If we love God, this is the position—surely, although we are not accustomed to apply grand epithets to such things, yet surely, in sober earnestness, a splendid position!—that all things work together for our good. We thus stand higher than conqueror or king; the world is our chariot, and we don't even need to hold the reins; the universe with all its wide-lying and progressive heavens our estate. "We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

A. RALEIGH, *The Little Sanctuary*, p. 213.

CONSIDER the argument sometimes so triumphantly alleged, namely, that since precisely the same troubles fall upon him who believes and him who disbelieves, it becomes absurd to say that these trials work in one direction for a man of prayer and in another for the man that never prays, and that circumstances, good or evil, work together for the advantage of the righteous in any sense which is not equally true of others.

I. I apprehend, however, that the regular and consistent life of a Christian man—the temperance, the integrity, the self-control, the good repute which will result from his convictions—will *tend* to obtain for him many temporal comforts which they will not absolutely insure, and will at least *tend* to alleviate for man many evils from which they cannot guarantee an absolute immunity. While it is literally and undeniably true that the same calamities come alike upon the good and the evil, it is a transparent fallacy to infer that the same ulterior results will follow in both cases. It is a fallacy, practically speaking, that the same visitation retains its nature and character under totally

different circumstances and applied to different objects. It is on the temper of the recipient that the result depends, and whether or not all things good and evil concur to his advantage.

II. Of the grand maxim that he has bequeathed to us, St. Paul was himself the living illustration. Surely he had enough suffering to teach him that the chariot of God rolls onward along its imperial way, without any stoppage for inquiry about the several circumstances of the poor travellers that it passes on the road! But no: there is not even a momentary symptom of any such misgiving. The Apostle had learned the secret of distilling the sweetest essences from the most repulsive ingredients. From every trial he extracts nutriment for sustaining a more steadfast faith, a more fervid hope, a more expansive charity.

W. H. BROOKFIELD, *Sermons*, p. 146.

REFERENCES: viii. 28.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 110; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 145; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ix., p. 84; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 289; E. Garbett, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 279; H. P. Liddon, *Christmastide Sermons*, p. 306; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 115; W. Hay Aitken, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 26; J. P. Kingsland, *Ibid.*, p. 123; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 423; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 272; C. Garrett, *Loving Counsels*, p. 63; M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation*, p. 153; J. Wells, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 48; G. Bersier, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 269; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. viii., p. 9; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 218.

Chap. viii., vers. 28-30.

I. FIVE Divine acts, through each of which in regular succession the purpose of salvation advances to its accomplishment, are linked by St. Paul into one golden chain, of which one end is let down out of the unknown past, and the other returns to lose itself in the unknown future.

II. From first to last this magnificent chain of redemptive acts permits neither halt nor rupture. The secret counsel of His will holds in its bosom all those whom the future glory shall receive. This is the thought on which, by the structure of his sentence, St. Paul intended to lay stress, and with reason, since it is the thought which pledges to faith the security of the believer and the concurrence of all things for his final good.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 265.

REFERENCES: viii. 28-39.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 93. viii. 29, 30.—*Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 177. viii. 29.—H. Drummond, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 263; R. S. Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God*, p. 162. viii 30.—M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation*,

p. 267; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 149. viii. 30.—*Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 287. viii. 31.—*Ibid.*, pp. 185, 189; Bishop Lightfoot, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 233; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. viii., p. 95.

Chap. viii., vers. 31-9.

THERE are Three Stages in this Challenge of Faith.

I. Who shall our accuser be? Nothing will stop the accuser's mouth, but the one mighty act of God's sovereign grace by which He acquits and justifies the sinner.

II. The adversary may accuse; condemn, he dare not. For Jesus, the Judge, is in His own person a threefold, fourfold answer to every charge against His people.

III. The Apostle flings down his glove to the forces of the world. What is his challenge but an echo to the calm strong words of the King?—"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

J. OSWALD DYKES, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 273.

REFERENCES: viii. 32.—*Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 341; W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 174; T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 23; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 256; H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3114; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 8. viii. 33.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 210.

Chap. viii., ver. 34.—"It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

MYSTERIES in Religion—The Ascension.

I. Christ's Ascension to the right hand of God is marvellous, because it is a sure token that heaven is a certain fixed place, and not a mere state. That bodily presence of the Saviour which the apostles handled is not here; it is elsewhere—it is in heaven. This contradicts the notion of cultivated and speculative minds and humbles the reason. Philosophy considers it more rational to suppose that Almighty God, as a Spirit, is in every place, and in no one place more than another. What is meant by ascending? Philosophers will say there is no difference between down and up, as regards the sky; yet, whatever difficulties the word may occasion, we can hardly take upon us to decide that it is a mere popular expression, consistently with the reverence due to the Sacred Record. When we have deduced what we deduce by our reason from the study of visible nature, and then read what we read in God's inspired Word, and find the two apparently discordant, this is the feeling I think we ought to have in our minds: not an impatience to do what is

beyond our powers, to weigh evidence, to sum up, balance, decide, and reconcile, to arbitrate between the two voices of God, but a sense of the utter nothingness of worms such as we are, of our plain and absolute incapacity to contemplate things as they really are, and perception of our emptiness before the great Vision of God.

II. Consider the doctrine which accompanies the fact of the Resurrection. Christ, we are told, has gone up on high "to present Himself before the face of God for us." Christ is within the veil. We must not search curiously what is His present office, what is meant by His pleading His sacrifice, and by His perpetual intercession for us. The Intercessor directs or stays the hand of the Unchangeable and Sovereign Governor of the world, being at once the meritorious cause and the earnest of the intercessory power of His brethren.

III. This departure of Christ and coming of the Holy Ghost leads our minds with great comfort to the thought of many lower dispensations of Providence towards us. He who according to His inscrutable will sent first His Co-equal Son, and then His Eternal Spirit, acts with deep counsel, which we may surely trust, when He sends from place to place those earthly instruments which carry on His purposes. This is a thought which is particularly soothing as regards the loss of friends; or of especially gifted men who seem in their day the earthly support of the Church. For what we know, their removal hence is as necessary for the furtherance of the very objects we have at heart as was the departure of our Saviour.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 206.

REFERENCES: viii. 34.—R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 278; E. Johnson, *Ibid.*, vol. xxv., p. 282; A. D. Davidson, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 55; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 112. viii. 35-9. —*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 113; Parker, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 344; M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation*, pp. 205-26. viii. 36.—*Sermons for Boys and Girls*, p. 44; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 250.

Chap. viii., ver. 37.—"We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

THE Gain of the Christian Conquerors.

I. Its nature. "We are more than conquerors." As I have said, the phrase implies that in the conquest itself is something greater than mere conquest—it is its own reward. To overcome temptation is better than to have had no temptation to grapple with, for the conquest, however hardly won, leaves the soul

greater, stronger, and more blessed. (1) Every conquered temptation deepens our love to Christ, and thus we are more than conquerors. We come here on the track of that great law of the human soul, of the action of which all life is full—the law that the trial of principle is its true strengthening. Passion catches fire by antagonism, difficulties waken it into stormy majesty, and it makes them its servants. Men speak of the power of circumstances to hinder a Christian life; of course they have a power, but it is none the less true that a strong love makes the most adverse circumstances the grandest aid to its own progress. (2) The love of Christ to us is a pledge that our conquests will become our gains. The living Christ is watching the temptation, and He will take care that its issue is a greater glory than that which could have come from a life of perpetual repose. God will open hereafter the marvellous book of the human soul, and show how each struggle left its eternal inscription of glory there.

II. Its attainment. How shall we know that we are becoming more than conquerors? When the love of Christ is the strongest power in life and a progressive power.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 268.

Chap. viii., ver. 37.—"More than conquerors."

THE keynote of Easter is victory. The Church still strikes it in the services of the day. It may be very difficult for some of us to reach it. But it is so hard, that all other conquests, whatever they are, are by this victory vanquished. "We are more than conquerors."

I. Every miracle of Christ was done overflowingly. The lame men not only walked, but leapt. The wine which Jesus made for the wedding feast was more than almost any company could have consumed. The very fragments of His feeding are twelve basketsful. He supplies all wants, and then He is at all costs besides—"Whatsoever thou spendest more." Now, apply this to our Easter theme. Christ has placed our life far above the level of the life we had lost. We lost a garden, we have gained a heaven. "More than conquerors." Then, too, His seeming absence is only a more ubiquitous presence. He is richer, and none are poorer; He is exalted, and none are orphaned. The problem is solved—how there can be distance without separation—how the communion can be invisible and yet be more real than when eye meets eye and hand clasps hand, for He is more than conqueror.

II. The very same principle which is thus embodied in the death and sufferings of Christ operates in the experience of every believer. Every man who is in earnest about his salvation has found, and the more earnest he is the more he has found it, that he is placed to contend not only with flesh and blood, but also with Satan. In this great contest, what is God's undertaking for His people? That they shall overcome? More than that. The power of Christ that is in you shall do what the presence of Christ always did when He walked the earth. Whenever walking this earth, an evil spirit met Christ, the evil spirit was afraid. And they shall be afraid of you. "More than conquerors."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 99.

REFERENCES: viii. 37.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 107; M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation*, p. 249; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 114; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 112.

Chap. viii., vers. 38, 39.

I. To live by the doctrine of Easter is to make that foresight of another world the standard by which we measure this world. Think of all pleasures, of all solicitations, of all pursuits as you will think of them then. A few years more, and how utterly indifferent you will be to the chief enjoyments of this world! You will be standing in the presence of Christ: how little you will care how successful you may have been, how rich you may have been, how admired, how delighted with abundance of applause! How absolutely nothing will seem the most important concerns of this life! But will all that has happened here seem nothing? No, indeed; Christ will remind us of the work which He gave us to do. A new mode of measuring all things shall then be taught us. A new balance shall be put into our hands. Nay, it is put into our hands now if we will but use it; but then we shall have no other. To live by the memory of the Resurrection is to begin at once to use this new estimate; to begin at once to declare ourselves soldiers of Christ, of Christ our conquering Captain, who shall lead us at last into the kingdom of light, and enable us to overcome whatever bars our passage.

II. Once more, to live by the doctrine of Easter is to have done with cowardice and half-heartedness. We make our victory a great deal more difficult than it ought to be by our want of courage. We shall meet with many failures between this and the grave, but we shall meet with fewer failures in

proportion to our courage, for this kind of courage is but another form of faith, and faith can work any miracle whatever.

III. Lastly, to live by the doctrine of Easter is to fill your service with happiness. We often make our duties harder by thinking them hard. Cheerfulness in the service of Christ is one of the first requisites to make that service Christian.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, p. 14.

REFERENCES: viii. 38, 39.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 9; A. Maclaren, *The Secret of Power*, p. 145; M. Rainsford, *No Condemnation*, pp. 256-63. ix. 3.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 331; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 109.

Chap. ix., vers. 3, 4.—"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren," etc.

CHRISTIAN Patriotism.

I. It is a noble paradox. The sacrifice which is offered is impossible. There is something of sadness in the passion which suggests it. Great as is the offering, how could it possibly save a nation which trampled under foot a sacrifice far greater? It cost more to redeem souls; that more had been paid in vain: how should the less now suffice? St. Paul speaks as a man speaks—the language of feeling, not of logic. Only let us recognise that it is his genuine feeling that he speaks. It is not a mere figure consciously used and to be explained away before we can get at his meaning. He would give anything to save his brethren—life and everything in life and beyond life that is dearest and best to him.

II. The words are a Christian reading of that virtue of which ancient life and the Old Testament are so full—of the love of country, of patriotism. We feel that Paul at least is seeing all the facts of life. He is looking full in the face the realities of the spiritual world; yet this has not extinguished in him the yearning, the pride, the patriotic fervour of his race; it has only given it a deeper, more personal, more practical meaning. There is the tie of common blood; there is the pride of historic name; there is the fond memory of all that the race has been—its responsibilities, its glories, the marks of God's favour to it, the thought of its yet unfulfilled promise; there is all that we feel with respect to our own native country.

III. Two things, let us note, Christianity does for patriotism. (1) It gives the sentiment a truer basis in reason. (2) It teaches us how much deeper and wider a thing is the welfare of the

community than men have dreamed before. Politics cannot be separated from morals. The law of God, the law of justice, mercy, unselfishness, rules the actions of a nation as well as every member of it.

E. C. WICKHAM, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 409.

REFERENCES: ix. 3-5.—E. M. Goulburn, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 207. ix. 5.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 270. ix. 11-13.—S. A. Tipple, *Sunday Mornings at Norwood*, p. 90. ix. 13, 14.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 12th series, p. 69. ix. 15.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 332. ix. 16.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. i., p. 627. ix. 17, 18.—*Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 322. ix. 21.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 61. ix. 21-3—*Homilist*, vol. ii., p. 23. ix. 30, 31.—J. Salmon, *The Anglican Pulpit of To-day*, p. 295. x. i.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 80; vol. v., p. 285. x. 1-11.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 61. x. 2.—J. Foster, *Lectures*, 1st series, p. 271.

Chap. x., ver. 3.

PREVALENT Errors on Justification Considered.

Note:—

I. The notion that the spirit may receive an honourable discharge at the great day on the ground of obedience to the law. It is an opinion which exists, indeed, in floating, formless hopes, rather than in the shape of clear and lighted thought; yet it is sufficiently defined and powerful to sway the existence of vast multitudes. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." No law can acquit a man who is convicted of its violation; if we should receive acquittal, it must be on another principle.

II. A more prevalent theory is that which supposes that sorrow for the past and amendment for the future will be accepted as the ground of justification. But the law "requireth that which is past." The law would still say, "Pay me that thou owest." We should still be in hopeless debt. For this additional reason amendment would not justify. There could be no justification, filling the soul with soft and sure delight after the tears of sorrow and the struggles for amendment, like the clear shining after rain.

III. Another prevalent opinion is, that justification is wrought by Christ, along with certain co-operative actions of the creature. What is the truth? The oracles of God declare the truth as to the provision that is made for our justification. We are assured that the sinner is justified by Jesus Christ alone. We must "submit" to the righteousness of God." We must submit

to enter an ark which we could not build, which we may not navigate, but which we must only enter in powerless dependence on unseen love and grace. The work of saving man, like the work of creating man, is Divine throughout. Other religions represent it as man's work towards God; our religion as God's work toward man.

C. STANFORD, *Central Truths*, p. 99.

REFERENCES: x. 3.—W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 213; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ix., p. 282; G. Brooks. *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 264.

Chap. x., ver. 4.—"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

THE Law of the Spirit.

In this text there are three subjects which call for remark: the Law, Righteousness, and Faith. Consider them in succession.

I. "The Law." By the Law is meant the eternal unchangeable Law of God, which is the revelation of His will, the standard of perfection, and the mould of fashion to which all creatures must conform, as they would be happy. As Adam, the child of the dust, was also an image of God, so the Jewish Law, though earthly and temporary, had at the same time a Divine character. It was the light of God shining in a gross medium, in order that it might be comprehended; and if it did not teach the chosen people all, it taught them much, and in the only way in which they could be taught it. And hence, in the text, St. Paul, when on the subject of the Jews, speaks of their Law as if it were the eternal Law of God; and so it was, but only as brought down to its hearers, and condescending to their infirmity.

II. By "Righteousness" is meant conformity to the law—that one state of soul which is pleasing to God. It is a relative word, having reference to a standard set up, and expressing the fulfilment of its requirements. To be righteous is to act up to the law, whatever the law be, and thereby to be acceptable to Him who gave it. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness," because He effects the purpose of the law. He brings that about which the law cannot do, because it is weak through the flesh, through our unregenerate, unrenewed, carnal nature.

III. But here the question may be asked, How can we be said to fulfil the law and to offer an acceptable sacrifice since we do not obey perfectly? I answer as follows: He can only be justified, certainly, by what is perfect; no work of ours, as far as it is ours, is perfect, and therefore by no work of ours, viewed in its human imperfections, are we justified. But when I speak of our righteousness I speak of the work of the Spirit, and this

work, though imperfect considered as ours, is perfect as far as it comes from Him. Our works done in the Spirit of Christ have a justifying principle in them, and that is the presence of the All-Holy Spirit. And this Divine presence in us makes us altogether pleasing to God. But again, there is another reason why, for Christ's sake, we are dealt with as perfectly righteous, though we be not so. God anticipates what will be, and treats believers as that which they are labouring to become. Faith is the element of all perfection; he who begins with faith will end in unspotted and entire holiness.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. v., p. 143.

REFERENCES: x. 4.—A. D. Davidson, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 22). x. 6, 7.—*Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 421. x. 6-10.—W. Hay Aitken, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 199. x. 6-8.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 47 x. 6-9.—W. Anderson, *Discourses*, p. 180.

Chap. x., ver. 8.—"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart."

SPIRITUAL Exhaustion.

These words were spoken to men who were speculating on mysterious subjects, and they touch, of course with necessary change, one of the troubles of this time. For many of us are wearying ourselves with endless speculation on the loftier subjects of thought in religion. It is not wrong—nay, it is right, for such is our nature, to speculate on these high matters; but if we do nothing else, then we injure our religious life, and lose the use of lofty speculation. Pride or despair follows, but chiefly exhaustion of the spiritual faculty, and oftentimes its death.

I. How can we retain the pursuit of high mysteries and truth and not lose ourselves in them, or be cast away in their despair? Whether in life with nature or in spiritual life, exhaustion and its results follow on a straining of our powers. We are ravished at first by the grandeur and the solemn beauty of the mighty questions of religion, and we neglect the wayside beauty of the Christian life. But after a few years at most the mystic glory dies away. These things are too much for us. We are bewildered by the multitude of questions which one after another, like a thousand paths from one centre, open out from each of the great problems. Who can count the dust of thoughts which fly around the question of immortality?

II. We should turn, when exhaustion threatens to tire and then to kill the spiritual faculty, to the simple Christian charities and tenderness of daily self-sacrifice, to the unassuming sanctities of those common duties which Christ urged us to do because

God Himself did them and loved to do them. In making our home happy by filling it with the spirit of gentle love—in musing on the life of our children, and seeing God in it—in watching for and rejoicing in the heavenly touches of Divine things, which meet us in the common converse of life—in the quiet answer, the genial smile, the patience, zeal, industry, cheerfulness, truthfulness, courtesy, and purity which God asks of us as we pass on our hourly way—in doing and watching and loving these things, we shall not be wearied. They make no violent strain on the imagination or the intellect or the spirit. They do not ask us whether we believe this or that doctrine, or involve us in the storm of life's problems. They are not impossible or inaccessible to any one. Their world lies all around us—in the ordinary relations of man to man, of man to animals, of man to nature, and a mighty God is in them that grows not old. They only need an attentive heart to find them out and a loving heart to do them, and they will give you rest. They will put you in possession of the promise, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

III. But we shall lose, we say, in this humbler life, the beauty and sublimity which in pursuing high things we found in youth, and we cannot do without beauty, nor aspire without sublimity. We look for beauty of act and feeling too much in the splendid sacrifices, and victories of more than ordinary life, in the lives of men at whom the world stand to gaze. The stormy life of Elijah, the agonised life of St. Paul, struggling continually with the higher questions of feeling, passed in an Alpine realm of thought. Both have their lofty beauty, but they do not win us to their side, or breathe peace into the heart, as the ineffable beauty of the simple daily love of Christ. As we understand Christ better, we see that His quietude was grander than the passionate struggle of the others, that His still obedience places Him in union with the sublimity of God, that His simplicity is the result of infinite wisdom at home and conversant with the deep roots of things. Lowland life, but always on its horizon infinite Paradise.

S. A. BROOKE, *The Spirit of the Christian Life*, p. 177.

Chap. x., vers. 8, [redacted]

I. CONFESSION with the mouth. Confession does not stop, though it begins, with the confession of sin, of the greatness of its guilt, and the justice of its punishment; it rapidly advances to the confession announced in our text; the con-

fession of sin being not only involved in the confession of Christ, but issuing in that confession in the largest and least qualified sense. He who feels that sin is destroying him is in the exact position to take home the truth that Christ died to deliver him. Where there is genuine confession of sin there will equally be genuine confession of all that is vital in the system of Christianity. Why then should not the being saved follow, as it is made to follow in our text, on confessing with the mouth the Lord Jesus?

II. Faith in the heart is that which will produce confession with the mouth. It is very easy, but very unfair, to speak of faith as a mere act of the mind, which naturally follows where there is a sufficiency of evidence, over which, therefore, a man has little or no control, and which, in consequence, ought not to be made the test or criterion of moral qualities. We pronounce this unfair, because it does not take into account the influence which the affections exert over the understanding, in consequence of which a man will readily believe some things and obstinately disbelieve others, though there be no difference in the amount of furnished testimony. It should be remembered that where the things to be believed are things which a man would naturally and strongly wish to disbelieve, there is great probability that the heart will operate injuriously on the head; and if notwithstanding the assent be given, and the unwelcome facts be admitted, we have much reason to suppose that there has been a struggle in the breast, a contest between the power of truth and the power of the inclination, which makes the case widely different from the mere yielding on sufficient evidence which is all, we are told, that can be predicated of faith. Belief with the head might leave the life what it was, but belief with the heart must be a belief unto righteousness, a belief which will be evidenced by the whole tenor of the life. Faith cannot be a barren or uninfluential principle. The doctrines of Scripture are such as, if acknowledged, are of the strongest possible interest to man, so that we must be justified in concluding, as we would of any matter of common life, that all real faith must be wanting where there is manifest disregard of all which faith would enjoin.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2167.

Chap. x., ver. 9.—"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

BELIEF in the Resurrection of Christ.

I. That which serves for the condemnation of the unbeliever,

setting at nought all his wisdom, works in every way for the good of the faithful, and so is it with that marvellous fulfilment —the Resurrection. It was such as quite surpassed all the thoughts even of good men. So that when our Lord so often spoke to the apostles of His sufferings and resurrection, it is said they "understood it not." Now, if that were the case then, so will it always be in the fulfilment of those things of which Scripture speaks; the great mysteries of Godhead, the wonders of redemption, things which lie before us, and are around us, and beyond us in Christ's spiritual kingdom; such as no senses are cognisant of, no thought of man hath conceived.

II. We have no faculties to comprehend the resurrection; our knowledge is made up of images of varied death; death is stamped on every thought we can entertain; we must then believe what we can in no way understand. Nay, we shall understand it by believing better than by any wisdom we know of. Our life here must be that of daily dying according to this law, until the Spirit shall bid us rest from our labours. O Blessed Saviour, Thou art always in the midst of us, Thy words always are of peace, Thy presence always is of peace, "It is I, be not afraid"; but we are troubled about many things, we cannot raise our hearts to take hold of Thee, to apprehend the substance and reality of God—man with us. "Why art thou so vexed, O my soul? and why art thou so disquieted within me? O put thy trust in God, for I will yet thank Him who is the help of my countenance and my God."

ISAAC WILLIAMS, *The Epistles and Gospels*, vol. i., p. 420.

THIS is a short chain to reach from earth to heaven—from hell to glory. And God meant it to be easy, and it is easy, but its ease is its difficulty.

I. "If thou shalt believe." It is of immense importance that we understand and realise the fact that all real faith lies in the heart. It does not dwell in the understanding; it does not lie in the province of the intellect; it is not the result of reasoning; no education will give it: it is in the affections. Faith is the belief of the heart. But why does God say, "Believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead"? (1) The resurrection is the seal of all. By raising Him from the dead, the Father showed that He accepted the ransom Christ had paid, therefore all the rest is contained in this, God raised Him from the dead. (2) That resurrection of Christ is our resurrection. We rise in Him, *now*, with a newness of life; presently, to a life in glory.

II. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus." What is the confession of the mouth? It may be that general acknowledgment of Christ, and the great doctrines of the Christian religion, which ought to characterise and pervade our common intercourse and our daily conversation. To talk of Christ requires an effort and offends people. And *why* it offends them, it is very difficult to see, but it does. We all know it and feel it and yet it is a very solemn thought that Christ spoke these words—"By your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned." (2) But there is another sense in which the words may be taken. There can be no doubt that from the first, all Christians were required to make, at some time, a public declaration of their faith. This confession, which was once, and is still, properly a part of adult baptism, now belongs to confirmation. Till he is confirmed a person has never made a public confession of Christ and of the Christian religion before God and the world. Then he does it. This places confirmation in its true light, and shows its great and paramount importance.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, vol. xx., p. 13.

REFERENCES: x. 9.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. ix., p. 131. x. 9, 10.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 273. x. 10.—*Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 282; W. C. E. Newbolt, *Counsels of Faith and Practice*, p. 64; W. Page Roberts, *Liberalism in Religion*, p. 75; A. Murray, *The Fruits of the Spirit*, p. 419; Bishop Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 185.

Chap. x., ver. 12.—**"For their is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."**

I. THIS declaration, at the time when it was first uttered, was probably equally astonishing to the Jew and the Greek: for the Jew, with his long-descended traditions, his sense of privilege of the most exalted kind, his habit of regarding the nations of the earth as in some degree unclean by the side of the people of the circumcision, to be told that within the pale of the Church he must doff his privilege and take rank according to his spiritual growth in Christ and not according to the purity of his blood; for the Greek, with his eager inquiring intellect, his keen sense of beauty, his frank enjoyment of full sensuous life, to be told that within the Church he was no better than one of the strange race—the Chinese of the Roman world—whom he knew vaguely as believing in wonders and worshipping abstractions, avoiding the hospitable board and the festive gatherings in which he himself so much delighted—this was no doubt a

hard saying, such as a true Greek would scarcely hear with patience. And hence it is, probably, that in its early day Christianity made more progress in mixed populations, like those of Antioch and Ephesus and Corinth, where the Jew was somewhat less a Jew, and the Greek somewhat less a Greek, than among the pure Jews of Jerusalem, or the pure Greeks of Athens.

II. But, however startling it might be, there it was, one of the root principles of the Christian Church. No doubt national or ethnic peculiarities have had a very large influence in determining mankind to receive the easy yoke of Christ, and in modifying the Christianity of various tongues and peoples; but once within the Church, a man is a man; the body, soul, and spirit of a man are the qualifications for entering the Church of Christ, not the blood of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or pure descent from the shadowy glories of Theseus or Herodes.

III. The Christian Church of the first ages was emphatically a great brotherhood. Perhaps at the time when St. Paul argued for the admission of Jew and Greek into the same community many of his countrymen imagined that he was introducing a long war of sects into that society where all should be peace and love. Yet the war between Christian Jew and Christian Greek was soon past, and out of this fermenting mass sprang the Catholic Church as we see it at the end of the third century. May we not hope that the time will come when the old traditions of the English Church, freshened and vivified by new influences, under the guidance of the One Spirit, may rise to higher wisdom and new life, and win more perfectly the love of a larger fraternity?

S. CHEETHAM, *Sermon preached on St. Andrew's Day*, 1871.

REFERENCES: x. 12, 13.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. ii., p. 463. x. 13, 14.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 32.

Chap. x., ver. 14.

THE opponents of "faith by hearing" are accustomed to speak highly of the general sources of enlightenment—the prospect of creation without us and the light of conscience within.

I. As regards the former—its universality and perpetuity, as a disclosure of deity to mankind, are utterly contrasted with the Christian system. If God were to interfere at all, they maintain, it would be by some universal agency, simple, general, and obvious, as the laws of His visible creation. They smile at the notion of God's greatest exhibition of His will to man being acted upon the reduced theatre of a petty province and made

dependent on the chances of human testimony. But what if we retort that those very laws of nature "on a great scale" have caused God to be forgotten? It is the permanence and uniformity of natural laws of creation that have beguiled men into speculative and still more into practical atheism; it is the very perfection of the laws which has hidden the legislator. Men ever cling to the nearest object: in the law they lose the lawgiver; or, what is more irrational, make a lawgiver of the law and deify the world.

II. The law of conscience. The gospel system overpasses every rival remedy, because it brings the affections to reinforce the conscience. Is this to debase the dignity of virtue? It is, as truly as when the virtuous father teaches his wayward child to love virtues by winning him to love his teacher. Is this to debase the majesty of the law—to unveil the adorable benevolence of Him who is its living impersonation? Is it a weakness to keep the law through love of Him who gave the law? Proud and cruel mockery, which freezes to despair, on pretence of hardening to fortitude, which forbids the sick to be healed on any terms but those which the healthy alone could use, and rejects a remedy because it is remedial, which would delude us to starve in the midst of bounty, because forsooth it is unmanly to be dependent on food—to perish of hunger rather than condescend to eat the Bread of Heaven!

W. ARCHER BUTLER, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 343.

Chap. x., vers. 14, 15.

MODERN Missions.

It is an integral point of the Christian gospel that it recognises the unity of mankind, abolishes old walls of division, and aims at establishing on earth a universal spiritual brotherhood. Consider how thoroughly in harmony it is with this gospel of human brotherhood that to every man is given the privilege of calling every other man home to God. Christ, in re-establishing unity among mankind, has done more than make man his brother's keeper; He has made man his brother's reconciler. Far from monopolising to Himself this supreme function, He has, as far as could be, associated every one of us with Himself in the highest and most sacred office of brotherhood. The missionary is a genuine apostle of equality and fraternity, true mediator between ancient foes, and herald of peace on earth; walking in the footsteps of that Divine Brother who, as the head of every man, "hath reconciled us to God in one body by His Cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

II. Again, it is another design of Christianity to reproduce in human bosoms the Divinest features of the Divine image. It aims at realising a practical community of feeling, interest, and effort betwixt God and man. Till His disciples get to be inoculated with the saving interest they are but half His, but half in sympathy with Him. If we are not only to have life—a niggard share of it—but to have life abundantly, then we must have love enough to propagate life; must be, not a cistern, but a well springing up and running over to the life of God.

III. Is it not the most startling and characteristic thing about our holy faith that it blends together in mysterious co-operation supernatural with natural forces? The Church has her part to play no doubt, and it cannot be dispensed with; but she does not play the part in her own strength alone. All through history the Spirit of God is at work rousing and directing effort, inspiring and rewarding sacrifice. There is therefore no room for any unworthy alarm, lest God's high designs for mankind should in the end be frustrated through man's neglect. When Christ hinged the world's conversion on the co-operation of His people, He called to His side a fellow-worker who was no stranger, but the very mystical body of which He Himself is the head and the heart.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 216.

REFERENCES: x. 14, 15.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 50. x. 15.—J. Baines, *Sermons*, p. 86. x. 20.—C. S. Robinson, *Sermons on Neglected Texts*, p. 120.

Chap. x., ver. 21.—"But to Israel He saith, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

THE appeal which Jesus Christ makes, with His hands stretched out upon the cross, to the hearts of Christians is twofold.

I. It is an appeal on behalf of God's standard of holiness, and against the laxity and sin of man. And He makes this appeal by the force of His own example. There are two ways of teaching duty—by word of mouth or precept, and by personal conduct or example. The first is necessary; it is indispensable. The second is more effective than the first. Teaching by precept is the method common to the saints and to the philosophers. Teaching by example is the high prerogative of the saints. Teaching by precept begins with the understanding; it may or may not reach the heart. Teaching by example begins with the heart. The understanding can hardly fail to

learn its lesson at a glance. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ uses both methods. Between the Sermon on the Mount and the last discourse in the supper room, He was continually teaching by word of mouth, sometimes single souls, sometimes His disciples, sometimes the Jews, now those who listened, and again those who refused to listen. But side by side with the method of precept, He employed the method of example. All through His life He reinforced His precepts by the eloquence of His conduct; but He gathered up all these lessons, or the most difficult of them, into one supreme appeal to the dormant moral sense in man when He raised Himself upon the cross and stretched out His hands to die.

II. Jesus Christ with His hands stretched out upon the cross makes an appeal to our sense of what He has done for us. Why is He there? Not for any demerit of His own; not only or chiefly to teach us virtue. He is there because otherwise we are lost; because we must be reconciled to God by the death of His Son. He is there because He has first taken our nature—made Himself our representative, and then, in this capacity, in bearing the penalty which, in virtue of those moral laws whereby the universe is governed, is due to our sins. When He suffers, we too suffer by implication. When He dies, we too share His death. His appeal is the appeal of love, of love the most tender, the most practical, the most disinterested. There are two lessons, in conclusion, which we may endeavour to make our own. (1) One is particular. Jesus Christ stretching out His hands on the cross is a model for all Christians who are in any position of authority, not only for monarchs or statesmen or great officers, but for that large number of us who, in various ways, have others dependent on us, under our government and influence. The model for Christians, parents, masters, employers, governors, is rather Christ upon His cross in anxious pain, stretching out the arms of entreaty and compassion, than Christ upon His throne finally dispensing the awards of judgment. (2) The other lesson is general. The longest day has its evening, and after the evening comes the darkness of the night. As the soul passes the gate of eternity, the pierced hands of Christ, which during the long day of life have been outstretched upon the cross, seem to the soul's eye to detach themselves and to fold together for judgment.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 868.

REFERENCES: xi. 5.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 197; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 270. xi. 7.—Philpot, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*,

vol. v., p. 49; Durrant, *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 301. xi. 15.—Bishop Temple, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 129. xi. 17-21.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 272. xi. 20.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 72; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 13th series, p. 53. xi. 22.—J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life*, p. 64; E. M. Goulburn, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 160; J. Wells, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 277; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 402. xi. 25.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 86. xi. 26.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 21. xi. 32.—*Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 196; *Plain Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 15; J. Pulsford, *Our Deathless Hope*, p. 202. xi. 33.—G. Huntingdon, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, 2nd series, p. 253.

Chap. xi., ver. 36.—"All things are of Him."

God's Creative and Providential Government.

I. All things are *of* God. All the good is of God by authorship, all the evil is of God by permission. In the great things of redemption all things are emphatically of God. For there is no spiritual life in the soul of a fallen man. If it ever lives it is through the vivifying energy of God's Holy Spirit. He excites the prayer and the desire to pray; He gives the ability to pray; His mercies yearned over us; so that He sent His well-beloved Son to die for transgressors. And His justice accepted a vicarious offering, and His faithfulness is pledged to cast out none who come unto Him through Christ.

II. All things are through God. We consider the first fact as referring to creation; the second merely to the providence of God. Elevated as God is above all that is human, why should we imagine that the scale on which we estimate proportions is that on which He estimates them, so that what we count great or small is similarly accounted by God? We believe of God's providence that it extends itself into every household, throws itself round every individual, takes part in every business, and is concerned with every sorrow and accessory to every joy. All things are through God as well as of God.

III. All things are to God—they conduce in one way or another to God's glory. Though to our dim reason many things seem rather from God, yet the day of judgment will discover that tribute is rendered faithfully and the very uttermost farthing is exacted, as well from sin which has scorned, as from guilt which has sought forgiveness through, the Redeemer's blood

H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1914.

References: xi. 36—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 37; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 322.

Chap. xii., ver. 1.—"Present your bodies a living sacrifice."

I. We have in the text a very remarkable way of putting what I may call the sum of Christian service. The main leading idea is the gathering together of all Christian duty into the one mighty word—sacrifice. Sacrifice, to begin with, means giving up everything to God. And how do I give up to God? When in heart and will and thought I am conscious of His presence, and do all the actions of the inner man in dependence on, and in obedience to, Him. That is the true sacrifice when I think as in His sight, and will and love and act as in obedience to Him. To consecrate oneself is the way to secure a higher and nobler life than ever before. If you want to go all to rack and ruin, live according to your own fancy and taste. If you want to be strong, and grow stronger and more and more blessed, put the brake on, and keep a tight hand upon yourself, and offer your whole being upon His altar.

II. We have here likewise the great motive of Christian service: "I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God." In the Apostle's mind this is no vague expression for the whole of the diffused blessings with which God floods the world, but he means thereby the definite specific thing, the great scheme of mercy, set forth in the previous chapters, that is to say, His great work in saving the world through Jesus Christ. That is "the mercies" with which he makes his appeal. The diffused and wide-shining mercies, which stream from the Father's heart, are all, as it were, focussed as through a burning-glass into one strong beam, which can kindle the greenest wood and melt the thick-ribbed ice. Only on the footing of that sacrifice can we offer ours. He has offered the one sacrifice, of which His death is the essential part, in order that we may offer the sacrifice of which our life is the essential part.

III. Note the gentle enforcement of this great motive for Christian service: "I beseech you." Law commands, the gospel entreats. Paul's beseeching is only a less tender echo of the Master's entreaty.

A. Maclaren, *A Year's Ministry*, 1st series, p. 315.

The Self-sacrifice.

Consider:—

I. The nature of the claim which is here made upon us. (1) Let us avail ourselves of the light which is shed on the nature of sacrifice by the term which is here employed. "A living sacrifice." The Apostle was addressing those to whom

both the need and the thing were perfectly familiar. Sacrifice stands out with great prominence among the forms of the Jewish dispensation; and among all peoples the thing is to be met with, though the conception of its nature and relation, both to man and to God, would vary according to the moral education and condition of each particular race. But it is to be questioned whether the idea could be fully comprehended until He, in whom was life, had, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, and laid on His disciples the obligation to yield themselves a living sacrifice to God. The true sacrifice must be a living one. (2) The presenting ourselves a living sacrifice is the first act of a true man's life. Carry on the association sacrifice with life rather than with death, and it will help you with the second principle. Our highest and holiest relations begin when we make the sacrifice of the whole heart of selfishness to God. (3) This presenting ourselves a living sacrifice is the ground of all true rendering of duty to the Church, the family, and the whole world of man.

II. Consider the ground of this claim of God; and I note: (1) The Christian sacrifice is a living sacrifice because God urges His claims, not on the ground of His right only, but of His love. The Father loves us with a love which even our sin and apostasy could not weaken. He loves us with a love which could grapple with and conquer death. (2) God has not left, He will not leave, His work for us. He sent His Son into the battle; He became perfect as the Captain of our salvation by suffering. The Father hath sent, sendeth still, the Spirit to carry on the work, and present it to Him complete in the day of the Lord Jesus. The striving and pleading of His Spirit still is the measure of His interest and hope. He is ready to animate us to achieve the sacrifice which His love constrains us to attempt; ready with all a Father's tender sympathy to share our burdens, to feel our pangs, to prop our weakness, to kindle our courage, to stir and plume our hope.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Divine Life in Man*, p. 139.

SACRIFICE.

What are the characteristics of the sacrifice which God's wonderful mercies have made binding upon us all?

I. First, the Apostle tells us it is to be a living sacrifice, and this is the great distinguishing mark of that personal offering required of us. Sacrifice of old was wont to imply the death of the thing or creature offered. Christian sacrifice is that of

the life, and Christ has come to enable us to make that sacrifice a worthier one by giving us fuller and more abundant life to offer, by quickening and transforming all our capacities and fitting them for greater things. There have been those who have thought to offer to God a dead sacrifice, the sacrifice of a mechanical obedience, the sacrifice of stereotyped habits; and such sacrifice is not out of date. Others, again, have thought to offer a dead sacrifice in the shape of a hard, self-contained religion—a religion without warmth of sympathy or expansive power—the exclusive luxury of its possessor; all such sacrifices have but a name to live, and He who asks for nothing less than our very selves cannot away with them.

II. Secondly, the sacrifice demanded is a holy sacrifice. What awe surrounds that word, and how far away from ourselves and this miserable, selfish, sinful world that word always seems to carry us! We know what it means; we know that it implies separation; the drawing off from whatever is low and sordid and soiling, the solemn setting apart of whatever it qualifies for the express service of a pure and perfectly holy God.

III. And, lastly, this is a reasonable service which is demanded of us, or, as the words might be rendered, a ritual of thought and mind as distinguished from the outward and material ritual which has passed away. It is an intelligent offering that we are called upon to make, one that is both prompted and presented by the reason of the understanding, one in which the mind goes along with the heart. This is the glory of Christianity, that it addresses itself to man's highest power, that it enlists his intellect as well as his affections, that it finds scope for his divinest endowment, and gives heavenward direction to all that is in him.

R. DUCKWORTH, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 33.

REFERENCES: xii. 1.—R. W. Church, *Human Life and its Conditions*, p. 31; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 13; E. Garbett, *The Soul's Life*, p. 313; W. C. E. Newbolt, *Counsels of Faith and Practice*, p. 125; H. A. M. Butler, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 228; H. G. Hirch, *Ibid.*, vol. ix., p. 40. xii. 1, 2.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 126. xii. 1-3.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 32.

Chap. xii., ver. 2.—"Be not conformed to this world."

CONFORMITY and Transformation.

I. There are two terms in the original language for the expression the world. One of them regards the things that now are in reference to time, the other in reference to space. The

one means the things that are seen, this material world, with all its enjoyments and gratifications, its riches, pleasures, and honours; the other means the time or age to which these things belong, and by which they are limited and circumscribed; the period, longer or shorter—we know not its duration, but God knoweth—previous to what we are taught to designate as the end of all things, that consummation of the old, that introduction of the new, which shall be the concomitant of the second Advent of Jesus Christ, the consequence of that second and greater Epiphany for which the Church on earth and in heaven is ever waiting and watching.

II. In the passage before us, the term rendered world means properly the period or age that now is. Therefore "Be not conformed to this world" becomes equivalent to "Be not conformed to time, but rather to eternity." Wear not the fashion of persons who belong to time and have nothing to do with eternity. Let not the garb of your souls, let not the habit of your lives, be that which befits persons whose home, whose dwelling-place, whose all, is in the passing unreal scene, which we call human life, and who have no part nor lot in the permanent and unchanging realities of the new heaven and new earth, which shall come into view with the return of Christ and the resurrection of the just. Wear not the garb of time, but invest yourselves already with the fashion of eternity.

III. No one can be conformed to, can fashion himself according to, that which he knows not. We are conformed to this world, not because it satisfies us, not because it makes us happy; not because we find rest or peace in living by its rules and principles, but because it is the only world we know, the only world, let me say, in which we know any one. The way to escape from our worldliness is not so much to struggle with it hand to hand, but to supersede it, as it were, by the entrance into us of a new affection; by giving our hearts to another, even to Him who has already entered for us within the veil, and who now and ever liveth to be our Intercessor and our life.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Epiphany, Lent, and Easter*, p. 1.

Chap. xii., ver. 2.—"Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

THE Christian Life a Transfiguration.

Notice:—

I. Where Paul begins—with an inward renewal, "the renewing of your mind." He goes deep down, because he had learned

in his Master's school who said, "Make the tree good, and the fruit good." This new creation of the inner man is only possible as the result of the communication of a life from without. That communicated life from without is the life of Jesus Christ Himself put into your heart, on condition of your simply opening the door of your heart by faith, and saying to Him, "Come in, Thou blessed of the Lord." And He comes in, bearing in His hands this gift most chiefly, the gift of a germ of life which will mould and shape our mind after His own blessed pattern.

II. The transfigured life which follows upon that inward renewal. What about the Christianity that does not show itself in conduct and character? What about men that look exactly as if they were not Christians? What about the inward life that never comes up to the surface? A certain kind of seaweeds that lie at the bottom of the sea, when their flowering time comes, elongate their stalks, and reach the light and float upon the top, and then, when they have flowered and fruited, they sink again into the depths. Our Christian life should come up to the surface and open out its flowers there, and show to the heavens and to all eyes that look. Does your Christianity do that? It is no use talking about the inward change unless there is the outward transfiguration. Ask yourselves the question whether that is visible or not in your lives.

III. Consider the ultimate consequence which the Apostle regards as certain, from this central inward change, viz., the unlikeness to the world around. "Be not conformed to this world." The more we get like Jesus Christ, the more certainly we get unlike the world. For the two theories of life are clean contrary—the one is all limited by this "bank and shoal of time," the other stretches out through the transient to lay hold on the Infinite and Eternal. The one is all for self, the other is all for God, with His will for law and His love for motive. The two theories are contrary to one another, so that likeness with and adherence to the one must needs be dead in the teeth of the other.

A. MACLAREN, *A Year's Ministry*, 2nd series, p. 17.

I. ST. PAUL had been dwelling at great length, in this Epistle to the Romans, on the unsearchable riches and goodness of God, in grafting the Gentiles into the stock of Israel, whereby they were become partakers of all the promises made to the Jews of old; which he sums up by this appeal: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living

sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

II. "Be not conformed to this world," be not like the age around you, and in which you live, the fashion of which perisheth and passeth away; but be ye transformed, let a continual change be taking place in you, by the renewing of your mind, by a new heart, new dispositions, and new way, such as is consistent with the new man, and the new birth in Christ, being made conformable to the Holy Child in obedience, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. "That ye may prove" the word, means to ascertain by putting it to the proof; by obedience men come to know what is pleasing to God, as our Lord says, "If ye do the will, ye shall know of the doctrine." Thus, by the renewal of your minds, ye shall learn that which is good, well pleasing to God, and perfect. The old sacrifices were not so, being but the shadows of good things to come; but the body is of Christ, He is the only good, the one well-pleasing and perfect sacrifice, and such are they who by faith shall be found in Him, perfect even as He is perfect, inasmuch as their old man being buried and dead, they are only known of God as having their life in Christ.

III. Thus in Christ must all Christian teaching begin and end. He is Himself the true Passover, and the Lamb that is offered; in Him alone is all reasonable service and filial obedience. He is the New Man to whom we are to be transformed day by day by the renewing of our mind. It is as parts of His body, as limbs and members of Him, that we are to learn humility and love to one another; it is in Him we are to be about our Father's business and in His house. He is Himself that little child to whose pattern we are to humble ourselves.

I. WILLIAMS, *The Epistles and Gospels*, vol. i., p. 119.

I. WHEN first we meet with such expressions as these, "conformed to the world," "transformed by the renewing of our mind," we may suppose that St. Paul is speaking of a state of mind which is suitable to us as inhabitants of this present earth, and of some other state which may prepare us for what is to come after death. But this is a very imperfect and slovenly method of explaining his language. The man who is in conformity with the world is not the man who understands the world best, not the man who admires the beauty of it most, not the man even who can adapt himself best to all its various

circumstances and conditions. He is too much a slave of the things he sees to reflect upon them or look into the meaning of them; too much devoted to all outward shows and enjoyments to have an apprehension of their secret loveliness and harmony. The word "conformed" is used very strictly; it implies that he takes his form from the things about him, that they are the mould into which his mind is cast. Now, this St. Paul will not for an instant admit to be the form which any man is created to bear.

II. Deliverance from conformity to the world is the transformation which is spoken of in the next clause of the verse. The process of this transformation St. Paul describes as the renewing of the mind. Such a phrase at once suggests the change which takes place when the foliage of spring covers the bare boughs of winter. It is not strictly a recovery of that which had been lost. The substance is not altered, but it is quickened. The alteration is the most wonderful that can be conceived of, but it all passes within. It is not sudden, but gradual. The power once given works secretly, probably amidst many obstructions from sharp winds and keen frosts. Still, that beginning contains in it the sure prophecy of final accomplishment. The man will be renewed according to the image of his Creator and Father, because the Spirit of his Creator and Father is working in him.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 123.

REFERENCES: xii. 2.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 28; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 290. xii. 2-18.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 84.

Chap. xii., ver. 3.—"Think soberly."

SELF-APPRECIATION.

I. Every man's view of himself is meant to be a correct deliberate thing, according to the facts of the case—neither degrading himself too low, nor vaunting himself too high, but thinking of himself as he really is and as God has been pleased to make him.

II. To guide us in such investigations the Apostle gives one single rule—"to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." It is a remarkable expression of his. It is not saying, Judge of yourselves according to the knowledge, or the peace, or the good works, or the attainments, or the powers you have made. But "the measure of faith." Does he say this because everything that is good in a man's heart is faith? Or is it that every other good thing

being proportioned to the faith we have, the measure of the faith is indeed the measure of everything that a man has, or that a man can attain, and so becomes the measure of the man, *i.e.*, is the man? Whichever it be, see the important part which faith acts in all our relations. We are really before God what our faith makes us. Realise the love of God to you, and by that realisation you have it.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 1865, p. 9.

REFERENCES: xii. 4, 5.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 170. xii. 5.—A. Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 13; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 265; S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, p. 283. xii. 6.—W. C. E. Newbolt, *Counsels of Faith and Practice*, p. 255; E. M. Goulburn, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 304. xii. 10.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, p. 232; H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *Sunday Sermonettes for a Year*, p. 170; *Saturday Evening*, p. 215.

Chap. xii., ver. 11.—"Not slothful in business."

THE Results of Slothfulness.

I. We frequently meet people who, on extraordinary occasions, or stimulated by some special inspiration, will exert much diligence and take great pains to produce something excellent and commendable, but who at all other times are slatternly and indolent, caring nothing, so long as a duty be performed, how slovenly may be the performance. It is against such a temper as this that our text directs its emphasis. You are not to be slothful in business—in any business whatever. Let us prevail upon men to be industrious, and we shall have called out the powers and formed the habits which religion most tasks in its commencement and demands in its progress. The industrious man, no matter what lawful objects have occupied his industry, is comparatively the most likely man to receive the gospel, and certainly the fittest, when it has once been received, for its peculiar and ever-pressing requirements Every man takes a step towards piety who escapes from a habit of sloth.

II. God may be served through the various occupations of life, as well as through the more special institutions of religion. It needs only that a man go to his daily toil in simple obedience to the will of his Maker, and he is as piously employed, aye, and is doing as much towards securing for himself the higher recompenses of eternity, as when he spends an hour in prayer or joins himself gladly to the Sabbath-day gathering. The businesses of life are as so many Divine institutions, and if prosecuted in a spirit of submission to God and with an eye to

His glory, they are the businesses of eternity, through which the soul grows in grace, and lasting glory is secured. If men are but fervent in spirit, if, that is, they always carry with them a religious tone and temper, then they are serving the Lord, through their being not slothful in business.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1793.

Chap. xii., ver. 12.—"Continuing instant in prayer."

IN the widest sense the injunction of the text lays upon us these things: (1) The habitual maintenance of a prayerful spirit; (2) the duty of embracing opportunities for prayer; (3) the duty of improving the occasions of prayer; (4) watchfulness as a part of constancy in prayer.

J. M. JARVIS, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 250.

REFERENCES: xii. 11, 12.—E. Garbett, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 244. xii. 12.—H. Alford, *Plain Village Sermons*, p. 1; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 18; W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 97; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 227.

Chap. xii., ver. 15.—"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

I. CHRISTIANS do not enough bear in mind the duty of cheerfulness. An open and lively countenance, a free and joyous manner of address, are considered rather as happy accidents, than as results which every Christian ought to aim at as part of his spiritual life. It is astonishing, if you look through the New Testament Scriptures, how many passages you will find recommending this suavity and urbanity of manner, as a grace to be sought for and to be attained by believers in Christ. The temptation of all seriously thinking men is to slide into shadow and put on gloom. To rejoice with the rejoicing requires some of that healthy and manly vigour of character which can afford to despise the taunts of men, and go its own way in the light of God; some of that hearty and thorough Christianity which does not live by its newspaper, but by its Bible and its conscience. When shall the world find among us a joy better than its own, and say to us, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is among you"?

II. But now let us pass to the other side of our duty of sympathy —to weep with those that weep. The words here bear no mere formal meaning. They imply that entire oneness, which not a transient fit of compassion, not a tear starting at passing or hearing of a scene of misery, will satisfy; but which requires a man really to enter into and give himself to the companionship

and tending of sorrow; in other words, to show active sympathy with the suffering, and endeavour to share and diminish their troubles. Nothing can be conceived more opposed to the natural selfishness of man, nothing less in accordance with the common maxims and practice of the world. It is by no means an easy thing effectually to weep with them that weep. Yet it is the duty of us all as Christians, and one the exercise of which is of very blessed use to us. And therefore we are not to turn our faces away from sorrow, not to avoid it as if it were something detrimental to us; but to feel it an obligation laid on us by Him whom we follow, a portion of our aiming at His holy example, a chosen bond of union with Him in one Spirit, to weep with them that weep.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 85.

REJOICING and Weeping with Men.

I. Our first remark on this twofold duty is that it is one which requires constant watchfulness and activity. The joys and sorrows of men around us are so constant and varied, so multitudinous and changeful, that if we are to keep up a sympathy with them we must be always wakeful. And what can be better fitted to waken men up than the joys and sorrows of their fellow-men? One of the chief elements in working out your own salvation is to forget yourself and enter into the joys and sorrows of others.

II. The text presents a task that seems to some impossible to carry out by one and the same person, at least in the same period. The mistake here lies in the idea that to sympathise with the sorrowful one must himself be of a sorrowful mood, and that to be in sympathy with the joyous one must himself at the time be joyous. It is not sadness that is sympathetic, but love, benevolence. And love will take to itself the grief of the sufferer, though itself it is full of joy. It is the sympathy of a joyous, radiant spirit that helps the sorrowful, provided only it is able to enter into true accord with the sorrow. You have seen a bright day of sunshine hiding its brilliancy now and again behind clouds, and even chequering its course with rain. It is such days that have rainbow. It is not the clouds that are the main thing, but the sun shining through the clouds. Sunshine is the grand requisite for meeting either the happy or the sorrowful.

III. The earnest endeavour to perform this twofold duty will be found an effective quickener of life and a key to all the

secrets of religion. One who is intent on doing both of these will find the need for much earnest prayer. Many a cry will spring from the depths of his heart as he finds himself hard and envious and selfish. And the broken heart will find that the true way to grow sympathetic is thinking much of Christ, looking to Christ, and drawing hope and confidence from Him, drawing courage and love from Him.

J. LECKIE, *Sermons at Ibrox*, p. 109.

REFERENCE: xii. 15.—H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *Sunday Sermonettes for a Year*, p. 167.

Chap. xii., vers. 15, 16.—"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep," etc.

SYMPATHY and Condescension.

I. The first part of the text is a call to sympathy. But notice what St. Paul meant by sympathy, how he describes it. (1) It is an old remark that it is more difficult to rejoice with them that rejoice than to weep with them that weep. Let us endeavour, in little matters, within our own doors first of all to be glad when another is glad, to feel another's as our joy, to be not willing only but thankful that another should have, even though that other's gain may be outwardly our own loss. (2) "*Weep with them that weep.*" The first requisite of all human consolation is sympathy, fellow-feeling, the appreciation of the calamity whatever it be, in its breadth and in its depth. Of all the designations which a human being under Christ's teaching can acquire, none is so valuable, in the estimate of a truly Christian ambition, as this, *A son of consolation.*

II. "Condescend to those things which are lowly." Is it not just the neglect of this rule which makes the chief evil of what is called society? It is a constant pursuit of high things; a struggle to rise one step higher, and then one yet higher, on the ladder of ambition, whatever its particular ambition be; it may be of rank, it may be of fame, it may be of fashion, it may be of excitement generally; most often it is, in some shape or other, the ambition of distinction; but whatever the particular aim, it is briefly to be described as a minding of high things, and the proper remedy for it is that here described by St. Paul, *Condescend to things that are lowly* There is a narrowing effect as well as a widening in the pursuit even of Divine knowledge, if that knowledge be chiefly intellectual. How many a man has ended his course a doubter or a disbeliever, mainly, we may well believe, for this reason, that he never forced himself to con-

descend tc the humble, never discovered that the true way to knowledge is through love! If he had learned to condescend to things lowly, he would have entered at length, with a true insight, into the things which transcend knowledge.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Epiphany, Lent, and Easter*, p. 21.

Chap. xii., vers. 16, 17.—"Condescend to men of low estate. . . Provide things honest in the sight of all men."

OUR Duty to Equals.

I. While the compassionate view of man, as compared with the ordinary view of him in his health and strength as a flourishing member of this world, is characterised by a beauty of its own, it has at the same time the defect of being a protected state of mind, a state in which the mind is for the moment relieved of all its tendencies to irritation and to asperity, and thrown into a perfect quiet by an external event which does everything for it without an effort of its own. The condescending life is sheltered from trials which very sharply beset the field of equals. The poor and dependent, the mourner, the despondent, the cast down—these exercise our active benevolence, but do not they unconsciously flatter us while they appeal to it? In the life of equals a man enters upon a vast field of relations in which his humility and his generosity pass through an ordeal of special and peculiar severity—severity far greater than that which attaches to any trial of them in the relationship to inferiors, for the simple reason that a man is in competition with his equals, and he is not in competition with his inferiors. To a superficial person it might appear that the great act of humility was condescension, and that therefore the condescending life was necessarily a more humble one than the life with equals. But this is not the true view of the case. The hardest trial of humility must be not towards a person to whom you are superior and who acknowledges that superiority, but towards a person with whom you are on equal footing of competition.

II. It is thus that a life of ordinary and common probation, which is what a man generally leads when he lives with his equals, is found, when examined, to contain a powerful supply of the most finished and subtle weapons of discipline. The trials of the sphere of equals touch the tenderest parts and apply the most refined tests; they find a man out the most thoroughly. It is common life that has the keenest and subtlest instruments at command. The ordeal of the sphere of equals

is amply represented in the New Testament. If by the constitution of our nature compassion has a particular gratification attending upon it, that gratification attended upon it in our Lord's case. His life among equals, proclaiming His cause against adversaries, invincible defiance, inflexible will—that was His hard work: it was by the struggle with equals that the battle of eternal truth was fought, and by this He fulfilled the great trial of a human life. First in the succour of man, first in the war with man, first in both hemispheres of action, the Firstborn of Creation lives in the gospel, a marvellous whole, to inspire morality with a new spirit, to soften man's heart, to consecrate his wealth. The light of ages gathers round Him. He is the centre of the past, the pledge of a future: the great character marches through time to collect souls about it, to found new empires for the truth, and to convert the whole earth to the knowledge of the Lord.

J. B. MOZLEY, *University Sermons*, p. 183.

REFERENCE: xii. 17.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 47.

Chap. xii., ver. 21.—"Overcome evil with good."

RETALIATION.

I. We must read this verse first in direct contrast with the prohibition, "*Be not overcome of evil.*" The immediate subject of both is that of injuries and their treatment. As to be overcome of evil is to let evil master us, so that it shall subdue and lead captive, instead of merely oppressing and overwhelming us; so to overcome that evil with good is to bring into conflict with injury, not anger, not sullenness, not revenge, but the very opposites and contraries of all these—patience, and meekness, and forbearance, and charity—and this so earnestly, so skilfully, so persistently, that they shall vanquish the evil, shall make it ashamed of itself, and repentant and reconciled, insomuch that the saying shall be verified, *Whatsoever doth make manifest is light.* Darkness shone upon is darkness no more; evil kindled by a coal from the altar becomes the good which it sought to overbear.

II. Evil, St. Paul says, is never vanquished by evil. Satan casts not out Satan, nor does the wrath of man ever work out God's righteousness. Evil must be conquered by good. View the saying in two aspects. (1) In reference to truth and error. Not in a spirit of strife and debate, not in a spirit of disdain or defiance, not in a spirit of superiority or self-confidence—in none of these tones ought any earnest believer to address

himself to the separatist from his faith. That were indeed to assail evil with evil. There is one way and but one to the mind of the unbeliever, and that way is through the heart. Not by negatives, but by positives; not by meeting this *evil* in hand-to-hand warfare, but by bringing into the field a wholly new and unexpected ally, by appealing to his sense of want, and then by showing how Christ has in Him the very food and remedy and rest wanted. It is thus, if at all, that the unbelief will find itself believing. (2) Sin and holiness. No might is really equal to the might of evil save the one mightier than the mightiest, which is the love of Christ constraining. Bring this good into the war with thine evil, and thou shalt overcome yet.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Sundays in the Temple*, p. 212.

I. THE most important and deepest part of the truths that are wrapped up in this great maxim of St. Paul is that the very genius of Christianity itself is a positive, not a negative. It is a life, not a code; a spirit, not a set of rules; a new impulse, not a mass of prohibitions. It is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is, above all, the spirit of life and of freedom, not of death and bondage. Now religion very often presents itself to the young in a very opposite light. Its commands appear to be exclusively "Thou shalt not." And this aspect of Christianity is of course a necessary one; but it is very far from complete. It is preparatory; it is the law, not the gospel; it is the schoolmaster that brings men to Christ, not Christ Himself. "I am come," says Jesus Christ, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." It was not to destroy and stunt and cripple energies, not to discourage action, not to repeat the old commands, Touch not, taste not, handle not, but to inspire new energy and new life, to give a new direction to the burning desire for action that flames in young souls; in a word, to give life. Fill your soul with new life, give it vent in action, and thou shalt not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. It is not only by avoiding sin, it is by actively doing what is good, that we make progress in holiness. Sin is not fought, it is expelled.

II. Surely there is a lesson here for all who have eyes to see Who are they who are ever ready with unhelpful grumbling, with pessimism and self-righteousness? Is it not those who have as yet no notion of the positive method of the Christian life, who have no other idea of dealing with the ever-existing evil of the world, except to proclaim that it is the duty

of some one else to repress it, and to hug themselves in blind Pharisaism? How far this is from the spirit of Christ! His was the spirit of inspiration to positive action. His life was not one of self-denial so much as of activity; not of repression, but of expression. It was not His sinlessness, it was His holiness that was the example to the world; and holiness is not merely absence of sin, but the presence of an abounding, overflowing goodness; and here lies its power and its contagiousness.

J. M. WILSON, *Sermons in Clifton College Chapel*, p. 311.

SOMETIMES it has been said that Christianity is deficient in what are called the masculine virtues. The world would give it credit for meekness, for gentleness, for purity; but the world finds fault with it because it lacks that energetic force which is seen in a strong antagonism and in a power of combat with the difficulties of life. They are inclined to say, "Such courage is of a passive order. You can suffer, but you cannot contend." Our answer would be that in this twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans you have a catalogue of Christian virtues, and amongst them is given one virtue which, I imagine, does not find a place even in the catalogue of the virtues of the world. It is the virtue of hatred. We are to abhor what is evil. Christianity will link her lot with goodness, and as in happy wedlock she will live in her sweet home where goodness dwells; but when she goes forth to the world she can put on the armour of entire abhorrence and determined antagonism; she can abhor that which is evil, or, precisely because she loves the Lord, she has learned to hate evil. And hence it follows that the spirit of undying antagonism to evil is indeed a Christian spirit, and is surely one of the masculine order.

I. The consent of all our experience may lead us to believe that we can overcome evil with good. Are you trying to overcome your children's faults in the spirit of fault-finding? You know it is not the way to success. The spirit of approbation, the spirit of appreciation, the spirit of imitation—these are the secrets of power. The spirit of Christianity carries us to things that are noble. It raises us to the stature of the fulness of Christ: that is to say, we shall be able to give expression to our nature, and that expression will reflect the image of God. To deal with it otherwise is simply suicidal; it is looking at the work and the energies of God's creation as though it were less than He meant it to be.

II. It is irrational to suppose that we can overcome evil in

any other way. The laws that govern the world are the laws of righteousness—the laws of good; and you and I, if we believe in them, must believe that it is never worth while to do evil that good may come; it is never worth while to sacrifice a great moral principle, even to achieve a great good.

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 17.

I. EVIL in its root is simply unregulated desire. Desire is that quality in us men which corresponds to gravitation in the physical bodies, which, while all is well with us, keeps us moving around our true centre, the Being of beings—God. Sin is the free concentration of desire upon some other centre than God—that is, upon some created being; and just as if, in the heavenly spheres, a planet could get detached from its true orbit, from loyal revolutions round its proper sun, and could thus come within the range of other and counteracting attractions, the effect would be vast and irretrievable disaster, so is it in the moral world. Sin is this disorder in the governing desires of the soul, followed by a corresponding disorder in its outward action; and in this disordered desire there lies something beyond, namely, a contradiction of the moral nature or essence of the one necessary being of God. Moral truth is in its principles as distinct from their application, just as eternal and just as necessary as mathematical truth. It is like mathematical truth, eternal, and therefore it is a law of the life of the one eternal Being Himself, since, otherwise, it would be a co-eternal principle independent of Him. And sin is thus the contradiction of God arising from disorder in those governing desires of the soul which were intended by Him to keep us men in our true relationship and dependence upon Him.

II. "Be not overcome of evil." It is not then a resistless invader, it is not invincible; for it is not the work of an eternal being or principle. Strong as it is, it is strictly a product of created wills. As Christians, we know evil to be both hateful and not invincible. It is our duty to abhor it; yet it is also our duty, and within our power, to overcome it. Simple decision, perfectly courteous but unswervingly determined will, will carry the day. Evil may talk loudly, it may bluster; but at heart it is always a coward, and it skulks away at the show of a strong resistance. It may be hard work at first; but in the end purity and straightforwardness and charity and reverence will win the battle; opposition will die gradually away into silence, silence into respect, respect into sympathy, and even into

imitation "Thou art of more honour and might than the hills of the robbers." H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 504.

REFERENCES: xii. 21.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. viii., p. 161; H. P. Liddon, *Christmastide Sermons*, p. 397; *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 50.

Chap. xiii., ver. 1.—"Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," etc.

THE Principles and Method of Christian Civilisation.

I. It may not be certain that this Epistle was written at one of the worst moments of Roman tyranny. It may possibly belong to that short interval of promise which preceded the full outburst of Nero's natural atrocity. But the character which the empire had assumed must have been perfectly well known to St. Paul. It could have been no surprise to him that within a few years the Christians whom he was addressing should be called to expiate the emperor's own crime by frightful tortures, or that he himself should be one of the victims. He wrote to prepare them for such events. And yet he says, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for they are ordained of God."

II. We lose, it seems to me, much of the Apostle's meaning, and pervert it to a purpose the most opposite to that which he contemplated, while, at the same time, we weaken the obligation which is laid upon us, if we do not perceive that these words contain the most strong and effectual protest ever made against the tyranny which they command Christian men patiently to endure. The very reason upon which St. Paul rests his exhortation to the Roman Christians is the reason which proves all such oppression as the Roman emperors were guilty of to be a false and hateful thing, a contradiction so gross and monstrous, that it can last only for a short time. "There is no power but of God." If the powers that be are ordained of men, they may be used according to the pleasure of men. It is merely a conflict between this form of self-will and that; between a despotism that exists and a despotism that is struggling to exist. If the powers that be are ordained of God, they must be designed to accomplish the good pleasure of God, all self-will must be at strife with a perfect will which is working continually for good. All efforts at absolute dominion must be a daring outrage upon Him who alone is absolute, and such struggles and such outrages, though they may be permitted a while for the fuller manifestation of that purpose which shall be accomplished in spite of them, have a lying root, and must at last come to nought.

F. D. MAURICE, *Christmas Day and Other Sermons*, p. 393.

I. This text is a good illustration of the manner in which Christian doctrine is ever made by the apostles the ground of Christian duty. They do not often teach us new duties—in fact, there are very few duties in any part of the New Testament which were not either recognised in the Old, or else perceived to be duties by the light which is naturally in the human mind; but the great feature of the New Testament teaching is this, that all duties whatever are put upon a higher ground than they occupied before. What Christ has done for us is made the measure of what we should do and the argument why we should do it; and Christians are regarded not so much in the character of men who know more than their fellows, as in the character of men who feel themselves bound by the mercies of God and the love of Christ to offer themselves up a living sacrifice.

II. Note two or three reasons why we might have expected that the teaching of Christ's disciples would not omit to lay stress upon the duty of honouring and submitting to the Queen. (1) In the first place, the general spirit of gentleness and long-suffering which belonged to all the teaching of Christ would suggest that quiet submission to authority was the right course for Christians. (2) Again, it is not to be forgotten that Christ Himself was declared to be a King, and that all Christians become by their profession subjects of this new kingdom. And in this kingdom submission was to be unlimited and obedience complete; the very lesson which all Christians had to learn was that they were bound to give themselves up with all their power and all their might to be a living sacrifice to Him who redeemed them, and to do His will with all their soul and strength. Hence, to a Christian the name of King was sanctified by its having been assumed by Christ, and the relation of people to king was hallowed. (3) Once more, the example of our Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh would have a great effect in enforcing such duties as those which the text contains. He who would not allow Himself to be made the means of insurrection when the people would take Him by force and make Him a King, and who paid the tribute to avoid giving offence, and who permitted Himself to be given up to the rulers and to be tried and condemned, would certainly have given His sanction to the doctrine of the text.

Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Parish Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 227.

References: xiii. 1.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 88; C. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, p. 32. xiii. 1-7.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. i., p. 141.

Chap. xiii., ver. 4.—"He is the minister of God to thee for good."

I. In the chapter from which my text is taken St. Paul speaks of civil rulers as ministers of God. He does not limit or soften his language to suit the circumstances of his own time. Nero's will might be devilish; every power which he wielded was Divine. He had been appointed to rule the world which he tormented by Him who loved the world. He was the steward of His treasures even by, if he spent them in making those miserable whom they were intended to bless.

II. But St. Paul says further—"He is a minister of God *to thee*." A strange assertion. The emperor's existence was a testimony to the poor Christian that he belonged to the great Roman world, that he was concerned, whether he was citizen or slave, in its welfare and its misery. That was a great step in his education, in his moral and spiritual education.

III. "He is a minister of God to thee *for good*." St. Paul writes this to men who might, in a short time, be lighting the city as torches to cover the guilt of him who set it on fire. Well! and was he not a minister of God to them for good if he was the instrument of inflicting that torture? The Apostle could venture the daring sentiment. He knew that by some means God would prove it to be true, for that generation and for all generations. And it will be known, some day, to how many men governments the most hypocritical and accursed have been ministers of good, by leading them from trifling to earnestness, by changing them from reckless plotters into self-denying patriots, by turning their atheism or devil-worship into a grounded faith in the God of truth. As Paul believed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and the King of men, he could not help believing that all human society was organised according to the law which He expressed in words, which He embodied in His incarnation and death—"The chief of all is the servant of all" He could not doubt that every Christian ought to maintain the truth which Nero set at naught, and that if he did, it would prove itself in his case—Nero *would* be a minister of God for good to him. F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 81.

Reference: xiii. 4, 5.—W. F. Fremantle, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 91.

Chap. xiii., ver. 7.—"Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

The Doctrine of Obedience. Note:—

I. As suggested by the passage generally, the breadth and

largeness of the gospel precepts. The broad principle is stated: obedience to lawful power. The application of it is left to reason, to conscience, to the inward guidance of the Holy Spirit.

II. The wholesomeness of the gospel teaching. There is nothing morbid in the Bible. Every one of Christ's precepts, this one most of all, tends to make earth a scene of order and tranquillity in the very same degree in which it teaches men to regard earth as a small and insignificant portion of the whole of their space and the whole of their time.

III. Notice a few practical suggestions upon the principle here laid down. (1) Among these I must place foremost the charge to carry it out consistently in all departments of life. (2) If it is the duty of one to obey reverently, it must be the duty of another to rule well. Whatever be our position, however humble it may be in some aspects, yet so far as it is one of authority, if it be but over a few servants, each one of us is, in the sense here designed, "a minister of God," an "officer of God." (3) We must act upon the charge before us in small details. Such as (*a*) cheerfulness in bearing the burdens imposed on us for the state-service; (*b*) respectful language at all times about those in authority. (4) Once more, we are bound at all times to cherish, and from time to time more earnestly to express, a spirit of thankfulness to God Himself for His gift to us of government. (5) We should take a more lively interest than is, I fear, common amongst us, in those parts of our public worship which have a direct reference to the persons of our rulers and to the deliberations of our legislature.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Epiphany, Lent, and Easter*, p. 39.

Chap. xiii., ver. 10.—"Love is the fulfilling of the law."

I. THE law being an expression of the mind and will of God, we have only to study the character of God more closely to interpret more correctly the spirit and intention of the law. The character of God is known to us by His works, His providences, His revelations of Himself by prophets and saints, to whom He has made Himself known. Now, the confluence of all these streams of knowledge, derived from what He has said and done, issues in the revelation of a God of love. To begin with, the act of creation is a work of Almighty love. So it has been said with reason that if a man should realise his existence as a creature, he would be urged by his own consciousness to live a perfect life of love. But to come nearer than creation, to come

to our personal contact with God, what is it that we find? The life we now enjoy rises in an ascending scale from peace and friendship and fellowship in work with God, to hope and promises beyond, from a seedtime of manifold experiences here to a harvest of immortality hereafter.

II. Consider some of the features of love. (1) In its aspect towards God, love has this note of encouragement, namely, that every movement of your love towards Him, though it be short-lived, intermittent and frail under temptation, is yet a witness to a certain congeniality and conformity of your nature to the nature of God. (2) Again, love is a motive which leads to imitation; you desire to grow like the one you love. (3) It is love that gives unity of design to the whole mechanism of the Catholic Church—its creeds, its sacraments, its ritual, its seasons, its festivals, its fasts, its penitences, and its joys. Just as the master-mind and the genius of one architect give order and harmony to the almost infinite details and creations of a Gothic church, so does love give system and symphony to the infinite varieties of the Christian life.

C. W. FURSE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 129.

REFERENCE: xiii. 10.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 28.

Chap. xiii., ver. 11.—"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

THE Sleep of the Church.

There are many thoughts crowded together here, but each is necessary to the other. They will not bear to be separated, but we must disentangle them by considering how each of them bears on our own life and practice.

I. It is clear that the sleep or torpor which the Apostle speaks of is not one into which Jews or heathens had fallen. He was not writing to them. He was writing to a society of men confessing the faith of Jesus Christ, declaring Him to be the Image of God and the head of men. How could the Apostle think that such a society should fall into sleep? Because he knew what the temptation to it was in himself. He knew that he, who had been called by Christ Himself, who had had visions and revelations, who had been in the third heaven, might sink into indifference and listlessness.

II. A society is sleeping a death-sleep when its love becomes stagnant, when it is not a vigorous operative power. Now, St. Paul knew that no circumstances imparted this love

to him; that if he depended on circumstances it perished. From personal experience he could testify that love to man might be as much killed by frosts as by suns; that if it is not kindled from within, everything from without may be fatal to it.

III. And how does he ward off the danger from himself? What contrivance does he use to wake them out of their slumbers? He reminded them that this indifference, lovelessness, this contention, self-seeking, was the accursed state out of which Christ came to redeem them. It was this hell into which He found His creatures sinking. It was to rescue them from this hell that He took flesh and dwelt among them and died on the cross and rose again and ascended on high. They had received the first pledges of this Redemption, of this Salvation. They had been enabled to feel and suffer for others, to desire their good, to love them as themselves. It was but a beginning; the glimpse of a Paradise; a first taste of the Tree of Life. They had a natural gravitation to self-indulgence, a preference for self-will, a desire for self-glory. These tendencies were always threatening to become supreme. Therefore St. Paul bids them think of the salvation which Christ had promised as something yet to come, as a blessing yet to be attained. This salvation from all which clogged their progress and hindered them from seeing things as they were—this salvation from lies, from hatred, from indifference—was all contained in the promise that He in whom is light and no darkness at all should be fully manifested. Every day and every hour was hastening on this manifestation, and therefore this salvation.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 15.

Chap. xiii., ver. 11.—"Now it is high time to awake out of sleep."

SELF-DENIAL the Test of Religious Earnestness.

I. By "sleep" in this passage St. Paul means a state of insensibility to things as they really are in God's sight. When we are asleep we are absent from this world's action as if we were no longer concerned in it. It goes on without us, and if our rest be broken and we have some slight notion of people and occurrences about us, if we hear a voice or a sentence and see a face, yet we are unable to catch these external objects justly and truly; we make them part of our dreams, and pervert them till they have scarcely a resemblance to what they really are: and such is the state of men as regards religious truth. Many live altogether as though the day shone not on

them, but the shadows still endured; and far the greater part of them are but very faintly sensible of the great truths preached around them. They see and hear as people in a dream; they mix up the Holy Word of God with their own idle imaginings; if startled for a moment, still they soon relapse into slumber; they refuse to be awakened, and think their happiness consists in continuing as they are.

II. If a person asks how he is to know whether he is dreaming on in the world's slumber, or is really awake and alive unto God, let him first fix his mind upon some one or other of his besetting infirmities. Many men have more than one, all of us have some one or other, and in resisting and overcoming such self-denial has its first employment. Be not content with a warmth of faith carrying you over many obstacles even in your obedience, forcing you past the fear of men and the usages of society and the persuasions of interest; exult not in your experience of God's past mercies, and your assurance of what He has already done for your soul, if you are conscious you have neglected the one thing needful,—daily self-denial.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. i., p. 57.

I. THE text tells us what we are. St. Paul is addressing Christians, yet even they are asleep. Sleep is a torpor of the powers. The more complete the suspension of the energies, whether of brain or muscle or limb, the deeper, the sounder, the more thorough is the sleep. If the Christian man is spoken of as sleeping, it must be with reference to the inactivity, to the torpor, of his characteristic activities. St. Paul does not say that we sleepers may not be dreamers, may not be imaginers, may not be somnambulists. This would be just his idea of the Christian sleeper. The children of light, living like children of the world,—what are we, while this is true of us, but sleeping men, haunted by phantoms, disquieted by night's illusions, and traversing (candle in hand) the chambers and halls and gardens of earth, with eyes closed and sealed to the light of an immortal day?

II. To awake out of sleep—what is it? There are acts of the soul as well as of the life. There are critical moments and there are decisive actions in the history of man's spirit. St. Paul knew this—knew it in himself. A moment changed him from an enemy to a friend. He never looked back. It has been thus in ten thousand lives. St. Paul seems to recommend this kind of transaction—a transaction between a man and his soul,

between a man and his life—in the short sharp watchword of the text.

III. The text adds a motive. "It is high time to awake." The nearness of the Advent is the motive for the awaking. It is a gratuitous supposition that St. Paul positively expected the Advent within the lifetime of the then living. St. Paul knew who had said, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man," and yet had coupled with it the warning, "Therefore, be ye always ready." Each generation—the first not least—each successively until the latest—should live in the expectation, gilding the darkness of death by the brightness of the coming. Happy they to whom it can be said, Christians, awake, for your salvation draweth nigh. This is the motive of the text.

C. J. VAUGHAN, ***Sundays in the Temple,*** **p. 1.**

REFERENCES: xiii. 11.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, p. 373; H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *Sunday Sermonettes for a Year*, p. 1; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 1st series, p. 1; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 286; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 282; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 481; H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2893. xiii. 11, 12.—G. Moberly, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 1; *Homilist*, new series, vol. ii., p. 456.

Chap. xiii., ver. 12.—"The night is far spent," etc.

INDUCEMENTS to Holiness.

I. The argument which is drawn from the greater nearness of death (for this is evidently the argument here employed) is not of the same urgency when applied to the believer as to the unbeliever. If I ply the unbeliever with the fact that he is approaching nearer and nearer destruction, I just tell him that he has less time in which to escape and therefore less likelihood of obtaining deliverance. He must do it before daybreak, and the night is far spent. But when I turn with a like argument to the believer, and bid him cast off the works of darkness because the day is at hand, there is by no means the same appearance of force in the motive. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed"; and if a man be secure of salvation, so that his attainment of it does not depend on his striving for the rest of his life, to tell him that the end is at hand does not look like plying him with a proof of the necessity of exertion. But it is no Scriptural, and therefore no legitimate, feeling of security which can engender or excuse sluggishness. The only Scriptural certainty that a man will be saved is the certainty that he will struggle. Struggling is incipient salvation. Christ died to save us from our sins, and therefore the more striving there is

against sin the more proportion is there of salvation. The Christian's life is emphatically a life of labour. Ought not then this well-ascertained principle—the principle that the consciousness of the greater nearness of the end of a task generates fresh strength for the working it out—ought not this thoroughly to convince us that to remind a man of there being less time for toil should urge him to toil with more energy?

II. And if this suffice not to explain why the day being at hand should animate the Christian to the casting off of the works of darkness, we have two other reasons to advance—reasons why the consciousness of having less time to live should urge a man who feels sure of salvation to strive to be increasingly earnest in all Christian duties. The first reason is, because there is less time in which to strive for a high place in the kingdom of God; the second, because there is less time in which to glorify the Creator and Redeemer. Let these reasons be well considered and pondered, and they will, we think, show that there is full motive to "the casting off the works of darkness and putting on the armour of light" in the announced fact that the "night is far spent, the day is at hand."

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2286.

Chap. xiii., ver. 12.—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand."

THE Day of the Lord.

It is more than eighteen hundred years since the Apostle uttered this exulting cry. We cannot repeat it to-day when once more we come to our Advent time without some sense of hopelessness. For what has come of it? we ask; is the night gone, is the day at hand? Century after century, with the indestructible aspiration of the heart, has this note of joy been taken up, and the aspiration has been disappointed and the joy unreached. The drama of mankind has been charged with so much action, apparently wasted, and so much suffering, apparently squandered, on the ground of this incessant hope, and yet the great end seems no nearer. On and on, stumbling in the night with bleeding feet and wearied brain, the great world has struggled forward, hoping for the dawn. "There is no radiance," it mutters, "on the mountains yet. I hope for ever, that is my doom; but the night is deep, and the day delays. Would God I could see the morning glow!"

I. St. Paul was wrong when he expected the final close in his own time; but he was right in this—that a new day was near at

hand. We are wrong when we think we are near to the last great hour of time; but we are right when our heart tells us that God is coming to bring light to our own souls, to awaken our nation out of wrong into right, to set on foot new thoughts which will renew the life of mankind, for that is His continuous and Divine work. The reason, then, denies the nearness of the time when God will close this era of the world, and denies it on account of the slowness of God's work. In reality God's work is never slow or fast; it always marches at a constant pace; but to our sixty or seventy years it seems of an infinite tardiness. We live and grasp our results so hurriedly, and we have so short a time in which to work, that we naturally find ourselves becoming impatient with God. To work quickly seems to us to work well. But we forget how, even in our little life, we lose the perfection of results by too great rapidity. We seclude no hours of wise quiet, and our thought is not matured. God never makes these mistakes, the mistakes of haste. He never forgets to let a man, a nation, the whole of mankind rest at times, that they may each assimilate the results of an era of activity.

II. But though that great day is far away, the heart asserts, and truly, that when there is deepest night over nations and the world and men, a day of the Lord is at hand; that a dawn is coming—not the last day, not the final dawn, but the uprising of Christ in light, deliverance, knowledge, and love. The belief is born not only out of our natural hatred of evil and suffering and the desire to be freed, but out of actual experience. Again and again have these days of the Lord come, has the night vanished and the sunlight burst on the world, not only in religion, but in the regeneration of societies, in the revolutions of nations, in the rush of great and creative thoughts over the whole of the civilised world. Men sunk in misery, ignorance, and oppression cried to the watchers, and the prophets answered, "The night is far spent," we see the coming day. And never has their answer been left unfulfilled.

S. A. Brooke, *The Spirit of the Christian Life*, p. 262.

References: xiii. 12.—H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol i., p. 1; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 271; A. Jessopp, *Norwich School Sermons* p. 219. xiii. 12-14.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. ii., p. 1. xiii. 14.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vii., p. 96; Archbishop Maclagan, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 273; F. W. Farrar, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 286; H. Bushnell, *Christ and His Salvation*, p. 371. xiii. 24.—J. B. Mozley, *University Sermons*, p. 46.

Chap. xiv., ver. 5.—"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

SCRUPLES.

I. We are all liable at various times to be troubled with perplexities about our duty, not because we find it hard or unpleasant, but because we cannot clearly see our way, and this perplexity sometimes amounts to something like darkness, and causes much fear. It is sometimes a doubt about the past, whether we have done right, and sometimes about the present, whether we are in the right way, and sometimes about the future, what we are henceforward to do. Such scruples and perplexities are sent or are permitted to come, it matters not which, by God; and it is intended that with these, as with all other opportunities that come in our way, we should fulfil some end which God would have fulfilled, and their purpose is too plain to be mistaken for a moment.

II. Scruples or difficulties which come in the way of duty are of the wrong kind; they are perversions of conscience, and they require a satisfaction which we have no right to ask. Very often they ask to have settled by reason what really is a matter of feeling. Very often they ask to be blessed with feelings which God chooses to give or withhold at His own pleasure, and which we cannot demand at our pleasure. The time is spent in lamenting past sins which ought to be spent in attending to present duties; the heart is given up to fears which ought to be given up to God; weak regret takes the place of vigorous resolution; longings for a sense of God's presence, or for a sense of our own love, fill up our souls when we ought to be proving our love by the proof which He has named, that is, keeping His commandments. All such scruples and such inward difficulties are not healthy, and to indulge them is not right.

III. We should consider whether these inward questionings elevate the general tone of our minds, not merely for the discharge of immediate duties, but for the formation of higher and nobler purposes in life. Unless this be the case, these self-questionings are simply of no use whatever. There were no men in the whole of the world's history who devoted themselves more entirely to questions of this sort than the Jewish Pharisees. And it ended in their case with the grossest and worst hypocrisy. Something of the same sort is very possible still. And the only way to avoid it is always to press the gaze of our consciences towards God and God's will rather than towards ourselves.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Rugby Sermons*, p. 101.

LIBERTY is one of the ideas on which the progress of mankind depends. It is now said that liberty is not only an indefinite term, but that it is nothing more than a negation. We are told, in order to prove its indefiniteness, that it has meant different things to different people and at different times, and that, if you ask a number of persons, they will give different explanations of it according to their prejudices or desires. And that is true enough. But all the same, it does not prove that the idea is indefinite in itself. It is the characteristic of any large idea to take different forms at different times: in fact, it must do so—it is the characteristic of an idea to grow as mankind advances, and its form is therefore sure to change. Outwardly, it must always be in a condition of weaving and unweaving, of ebb and flow, of birth and death. But if people took the trouble, they could at any time arrive at its root and express that in a definite statement. That is the work of the student.

I. The idea of liberty on the side of religion is founded on the fact that God has made each one of us a distinct person; that we each possess, and are bound to act up to, an individuality. I have an intellect, heart, character, and life of my own, modified by circumstances and by the influences of others, but my own; and I have a body of thought as the result of this, which I have a more absolute right to than I have to my property, and which I am bound to express by a stronger duty than that which binds me to my property. Why is that? From the religious point of view I answer, Because it is God who has made you an individual. It is He Himself who, in you, has made you a representative of a distinct phase of His being, a doer of a distinct part of His work. If anything is remarkable in Christianity, it is the way in which it gave an impulse to individual thought and to the freedom of self-development.

II. But this development is impossible if thought and its expression are restrained. For a father to do that for his child is bad enough—for a state or a church to do it for a large number of their subjects is worse still; and whenever this liberty is repressed by force of arms, those who do it are fighting against God. And men have always felt this and every struggle for liberty of thought becomes a religious one, and ought to be considered as such. We hold then, (1) that God practically says to man, "Fight out every question; I give you absolute freedom of thought on them, and I wish you to use it." On the whole, and often by reason of the very elements which seem to oppose it, there has been in this world a fierce freedom

of discussion and thought, and it has had its source in God. (2) We hold, secondly, since God guides the world, that, however fierce the battle, and however confusing the chaos of opinions, the best and noblest thing will in the end prevail, and its idea in its right and perfect form stand clear at last and be recognised by all. And when all the ideas which are necessary for man to believe and act on have gone through this long series of experiments, and are known and loved by all, then will the race be perfect.

III. Now, these things, being believed, are a ground of the idea of liberty I have put forward. We ought to fall in with the method of God's education of the race, and the way to do it is for the state in public life, and for ourselves in social and private life, to give perfect liberty of thought and its expression on all possible subjects. "But if we allow absolute freedom of thought and expression we do not produce any clear ideas on any subject, only a chaos of opinions—as, for example, on the subject of Liberty." That is only too likely to be your view, if you do not believe in a God who is educating the race. And you are driven back, having no faith or hope, on the plan of authority; but the true lover of liberty, who believes in God as a Divine and guiding Spirit in men, has not only hope, but certainty that a solution will be found. He knows that the best and highest view of the idea will in the end prevail, and that the more liberty of discussion he gives, even of evil and dangerous opinions, the sooner will the solution be arrived at.

S. A. Brooke, *The Fight of Faith*, p. 99.

Liberty at Home.

I. It is the habit of some parents, not only to check, but even to forbid the expression of opinion on the part of their sons and daughters long after they have reached an age when they ought to be able and to be encouraged to think for themselves. As long as their opinions are the mere echoes of those that rule the household nothing is said, but the moment they differ from them restriction comes in. Such a household lives under a paternal despotism, a government which may have some good results as long as the children are quite young, but the results of which are evil in a home when the age of childhood is passed as they are evil in a state when the age of barbarism has been gone through. For if this kind of despotism succeeds, either through love or through violence, and you have imposed your opinions and your character on your children, what have you

done? You have crushed that which was individual in them, their own views. They are not themselves; they have never known what they are, and of course they have no original power and can make no progress. Their life is dull, their thoughts conventional, and they become in after life only one addition the more to the rolled pebbles on the beach of society. And if English parents were all to follow the same plan, or if English children did not continually break through this plan, our society would soon sink into the prolonged infancy of a society like that of China, and all the progress of the nation and of the race of man, so far as England sets it forward, be stopped. That would be the result of complete success, and it is just the same in states as it is in families.

II. Having freedom, your children will not abuse it, for they will not only love you, which counts for nothing in these matters, but have real friendship for you, which does; and it will be a friendship which will—since you have accustomed them to weigh evidence—frankly give its full weight to your longer experience. Then, too, they will never be exposed to those violent religious shocks which come on young men and young women who have been hidden away from the difficulties of the day, and who are often utterly overwhelmed when they come out into the world. A boy so trained is not likely to have all his religion knocked on the head, like many weak persons at their first entrance into controversy. Nor is he much horrified with himself if he does doubt or get in some religious darkness, for he has been taught by his father that God is educating him, and that in the end he must see truth. He does not then give up the battle, for his whole training makes him love God too well for that; but he is not in a great hurry, nor is he ever in despair. He watches and waits when he cannot see his way; he is ready to move forward when he does; he has a great faith to support him that he is God's for ever, and that God will make the best opinion prevalent both for him and the world. And through all, his "parents"—who have always reverenced his soul, always given his questioning intelligence and soul freedom of expression, always looked forward to, and when it came accepted, even with joy, the time when he would emancipate himself from the narrower interests and say, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"—remain his friends, trusted, believed in, communicated with. He owes to them the greatest gift one man can owe to another, independence of mind, and at the root of life a noble, religious faith—faith that God has

chosen him to be a living individual person, and that He will make him perfect in the end.

S. A. Brooke, *The Fight of Faith*, p. 118.

References: xiv. 5.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 23. xiv. 5, 6.—F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 160.

Chap. xiv., ver. 7.—"No man liveth to himself."

I. Look at the text as it is interpreted for us by the section of the Epistle to the Romans in which it is found. That section is devoted to an elucidation of the principles by which the early Christians were to be guided as to their observance or non-observance of particular festival days and as to their abstinence or non-abstinence from certain kinds of meats and drinks. "None of us," says the Apostle, "liveth to himself." However it may be with others, none of us Christians liveth unto himself. Each of us has accepted Christ as his Redeemer and Lord, and is seeking in all things to serve Him, so if one eateth, he eateth unto the Lord, and if another eateth not, he eateth not unto the Lord. Because we are seeking to live to Christ, there is, in reference to all matters indifferent, perfect liberty to the individual conscience, and no one has a right to judge or set at nought another for doing that of which he is fully persuaded in his own mind, and which he is seeking to do as unto the Lord. Not our own pleasure, but rather the glory of Christ and the edification and peace and progress of the brotherhood, is to be made the rule of our lives.

II. Consider the text as an inevitable condition of human existence. No man's life terminates on himself alone, but each of us exerts an influence through his character and conduct upon all with whom he comes in contact. Make haste, then, and see whether the effect of your life on others is good or evil; and if evil, seek for goodness and renewal at the hand of Christ.

III. Read the text as it expresses the deliberate purpose of every genuine Christian. The true believer forswears self. From the moment of his conversion his whole being runs Christward. The volume of the river may be small at first, but, small as it is, its direction is decided, and it gathers magnitude as it flows, for it drains the valley of his life. He keeps himself for Christ, because he owes everything to Christ.

W. M. Taylor, *Contrary Winds*, p. 341.

References: xiv. 7, 8.—R. S. Candlish, *Sermons*, p. 250; J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life*, vol. ii., p. 331; S. Martin, *Comfort in Trouble*, p. 190; D Moore, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3057.

Chap. xiv., vers. 7-9.

I. First among the causes of the gospel's triumph if it be not rather the sole cause, is that the belief in the crucifixion and resurrection was not a bare profession, but a real inward life. That some new principle was really working in and fashioning the minds of believers is always assumed by the apostles, and not in the way of a heated enthusiasm, in which the mind projects the colours of its tainted eyesight upon the facts it sees, but as calmly as we could speak of the transactions of the parliament, the law-court, or the exchange. Young lads and tender women, common workmen and slaves, showed that a new spring moved all their actions; and those who came in contact with them, if they had in their hearts any germ of good at all, must have felt the influence of this moral supremacy. And can we find any other solution of this change than the simplest of all, that Christ was keeping His promise of being ever with His disciples? It was God who wrought in them; it was the promised Spirit of God that guided them; it was the Lord of the dead and living who was sitting at the right hand of God and helping and communing with those whom the Father had given Him.

II. Supposing the Divine agency to be admitted, then it follows that our Lord's nature is Divine. God cannot have been working for so many centuries in the Church causing men to bring forth fruits of righteousness in order to confirm in the earth an idolatrous delusion. Had the Church of Christ been perpetuating that worst of errors, taking the glory of God and transferring it to another, long since would the fountains of grace have been dried up from it, and the spiritual rains of heaven would have refused to refresh it until its idolatry was purged away. But we may bow the knee in His name, we may look up to Him on His Divine throne, we may say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God," because the steady fulfilment of His promises and the streams and blessing ever derived from Him by His Church assure us that His account of His Divine relation to the Father is the very truth.

Archbishop Thomson, *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, p. 109.

Reference: xiv. 7-9.—J. Duncan, *The Pulpit and Communion Table*, p. 249.

Chap. xiv., ver. 8.—"We ive unto the Lord."

I. What is meant by this strange word "unto"? We live "unto the Lord." It seems to impart at once into the phrase an air of unfamiliarity if not of actual unreality. I will try and

explain this. The right and full understanding of it indeed would make any one a master of St. Paul's philosophy, but some understanding of it we all may win.

II. We have very close relations with each other. No one saw more clearly than St. Paul that religion was bound to take these relations into account, to illuminate and sanctify them. Christ's religion is above all others the religion of humanity. But St. Paul knew very well that the religion which is based only on men's relations to one another would be a very imperfect one; for there is a third element in religion which must never be absent, and that is God. By the word *unto*, live *unto* the Lord, St. Paul embodies the relation between these three great elements. Live, he says, and perform all your duties to society and to one another; and the way to do so is to live unto the Lord. You are to live with men, for men, but with your thoughts reaching out unto God. These real personal relations between your individual soul and God are not to be sacrificed to your duties to one another; nay, more, you cannot live as St. Paul bids you live, until you live unto God, with your eyes and thoughts and prayers turned to Him.

III. Consider how a real living obedience to the command to live unto the Lord would affect our lives here in our present society. (1) To live means with us all to work. Work in one form or other occupies a large part of our lives. Do you not think it would make a great difference to any man if he felt that all his work was done unto the Lord, not unto men? It would make his work trustworthy; discontent would have no place; consciously superficial work would be impossible, for our work is done for the eye of our Master in heaven. (2) Again, think what dignity it adds to labour. We are working under our Master's eye, and no work that He gives us is petty or uninteresting. (3) An honest endeavour to grasp this conception is the greatest possible help against positive downright sins; it gives calmness, hopefulness, and the courage of a soul at rest.

J. M. WILSON, *Sermons in Clifton College Chapel*, p. 52.

I. NOTE, first, that St. Paul feels and acknowledges the difference that separates the fundamental question of the faith of Christ from those of merely subordinate importance. That Christ, the commissioned Son of God, and Himself God manifest in the flesh, is the sole hope of the believer, exclusive of all reference to human merit; that if man will be just before the living God, it is only in and through Christ that he can be

accepted as such; that His work is a complete work, to which man can add nothing, but from which man receives everything; that this is the cardinal fact of the religion which God brought from heaven to earth, and that in this, as in a germ, is enfolded the whole glorious story of eternity, St. Paul insists, reiterates, enforces. But in minor differences of view the principle of charity, wrought by the belief of the main and fundamental, is the guiding star.

II. The "Lord" here spoken of is at once Christ and God. Unto Him, as Christians, we are called upon to live; He who is the principle of our spiritual life is also made the object of it, as the vapours of the ocean supply the rivers that return unto the ocean itself. Unto Him, as Christians, we are called upon to die; He who died for us is made the object of our death likewise. To live unto God is but to return Him His own right in the human heart, to concentrate on Him those affections which originally were formed for Him alone. What is it but to know that even while this shadowy world encompasses us there is around and above it a scene real, substantial, and eternal—a scene adequate, and at this moment adequate, to answer all the ardent longings of our bereaved souls—a scene in which every holier affection, widowed and blighted here, is to be met and satisfied? To live in this belief, this hope; to read in the death of Christ death itself lost in immortality; to make the God of the New Testament the friend, the companion, the consoler of all earthly sorrow; to feel the brightest colours of ordinary life fade in the glory that shall be revealed,—this is to live the life that heralds the immortality unto God.

W. ARCHER BUTLER, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 17.

THE Christian Idea of Life.

I. "To the Lord we live; to the Lord we die." That idea of life is founded on the great truth expressed in the previous verse—"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." In one aspect that is a universal and inevitable law. We are not separate beings, linked only together by outward ties or for selfish purposes. We are not lonely men floating in the stream of time, just now and again in transient companionship with our fellows. Our life is, and must be, part of a larger life, the life of humanity; for by mysterious chains of influence we are bound to each other and to the world. Now, Paul says that what all other men must do unconsciously the Christian does consciously. Unable to live entirely for himself, he chooses not to live for himself at all. He gives the law its highest meaning

in voluntarily dedicating his life and death as one perpetual offering to God, and living thus, he lives most nobly as a blessing to society.

II. The motive by which this consecration may be realised. This is given us in the verse which follows our text: "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and living." It is from Christ's lordship over life, therefore, that the inspiration springs by which we are enabled to dedicate our whole lives. There are two aspects of this lordship. (1) By the power of His love Christ is Lord over our voluntary life. Among our fellow-men we recognise a kinghood of souls. There are those whom we reverence as spiritual leaders, to whom we yield a loving homage. We rejoice to look up to those greater spirits for guidance and help, and in a sense they reign over us. But far more profoundly is this true with regard to Christ. (2) The second aspect is Christ's lordship over the inevitable events of life. All things are given into His hands. He is King over our whole histories. Our disappointments, failures, sorrows, "death's agonies and fears," are known to and sympathised with by Him. Does not this form a glorious inspiration to surrender?

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 74.

REFERENCES: xiv. 8.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 162. xiv. 9.—Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 332; R. S. Candlish, *Sermons*, p. 266; S. Martin, *Comfort in Trouble*, p. 204; R. S. Candlish, *Sermons*, p. 266. xiv. 10.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 165; Todd, *Lectures to Children*, p. 62; F. W. Robertson, *The Human Race*, p. 134; Parker, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 289. xiv. 11.—*Plain Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 259. xiv. 12.—E. Garbett, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 74; H. P. Liddon, *Advent Sermons*, vol. i., p. 383; R. W. Church, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 365; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 131; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. viii., p. 245; *Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 217; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 347. xiv. 16.—W. Ince, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 344.

Chap. xiv., ver. 17.

IN this verse of Scripture joy is not the first but the last of three. Joy is the home in which the pilgrim rests; righteousness and peace are the paths by which he reaches it.

I. Righteousness. It is the want of righteousness, or guilt, that disturbs our peace or damps our joy. Here lies the root of the ailment, and here, therefore, must the cure begin. A righteousness suitable to our need must obviously consist of two parts—the evil must be removed and the good imparted.

Christ's sacrifice and work correspond to this twofold need of guilty man. His death blots out the guilt, and His life becomes the righteousness of His believing people. Christ personally is everything in the gospel.

II. Peace enjoyed flows from righteousness possessed. When I have righteousness then I have peace. The peace of which the text speaks dwells on earth, but it has been produced there by another peace which has its home in heaven. It is when God is at peace with me that I am at peace with God. When His anger is turned away my confidence in Him begins. I need not cherish my dread when He has taken His wrath away. When peace is proclaimed from the judgment-seat to me, peace echoes from my glad heart up to heaven again.

III. Joy in the Holy Ghost. Here at last is the thing we have been seeking all our days; it is joy, or happiness. There are two conditions possible to a human soul in this life: the one, to be in sin and at enmity with God; the other, to be righteous in Christ's righteousness, and at peace with God through the blood of the Cross. In respect of the happiness which these two conditions yield, they are related as night and day are related in respect to light. In the region nearest us, and at certain times, they may approach or seem to approach an equality. The night sometimes, through moon and stars and wintry meteors, has a good deal of light in it; and the day sometimes, through rising smoke and hovering clouds, has a good deal of darkness in it. A night of many stars may seem brighter than a day of many clouds; but the night is notwithstanding far different from day. Immortal souls in sin and under wrath may have many bright joys as they traverse this life, but their joys are only sparks on the surface of an eternal night; on the other hand, Christian disciples may have many sorrows, but these are only clouds hovering in the thin atmosphere of earth, hiding heaven from view for the moment, but leaving all the eternity beyond an undimmed, unending light.

W. ARNOT, *Family Treasury*, July 1861.

REFERENCES: xiv. 17.—Parker, *City Temple*, 1871, p. 445; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 97.

Chap. xiv., ver. 19.—"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another." R.V.

I. THIS was wise counsel, and counsel that we cannot doubt was in accordance with the mind of Christ. But it has not

been much heeded in the Church. Of course there have been peaceable and charitable spirits here and there, who have looked with kindliness and respect on those from whom they have differed in opinion or practice, who have even been willing to receive and honour as brethren all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and have been honestly trying to do His work. But the disposition to follow the things that make for strife, and by which one may be set at variance with another, has been, perhaps, more common than the disposition to follow the things which make for peace, and by which we may edify one another.

II. Let us endeavour to be both just and generous in all our relations with those who serve the same Master as ourselves, and in all our criticisms and our judgments upon them. I do not mean at all that we should disguise and conceal our convictions on questions of great though not of the greatest importance, because those convictions may not commend themselves to our neighbours. We are not bound to do that. We are not even at liberty to do it. But we may be persuaded, and we may say with all humility that we think we have learned from the Lord Jesus, that certain conceptions of the Church, and of the nature of religion and of duty, which we hold and cling to, are more in harmony with His will than other conceptions which are held and cherished by our neighbours. We may be persuaded of this, and yet abstain from everything that can engender strifes, keeping ever, strong as our convictions may be, and clear and uncompromising though we may be in the avowal of them, "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." That is to be our aim. In view of the controversies of our time it is incumbent on us to take heed to ourselves, lest in defending what we think to be truth we break the peace and sin against the law of charity, which is the supreme law of the kingdom of God.

H. Arnold Thomas, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 379.

References: xiv. 19.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 341. xiv. 20.—*Saturday Evening*, p. 28. xiv. 22.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 386. xv. 1.—H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 113.

Chap. xv., vers. 1-3

Against Self-pleasing.

I. We ought not to please ourselves. "We": who are the we? Christians, but not that alone. Among Christians, the strong.

"We that are strong." The strength here indicated is not the general strength of the Christian character, although that in a measure is implied, but strength in the one respect of a broad intelligent faith as to the lawfulness of all kinds of food, and as to the complete abrogation of the Mosaic law. It is very noticeable that the Apostle has no corresponding exhortation to the weak. I suppose he foresaw that very few would be willing to accept the terms as descriptive of themselves and their state—that for one who would go and stand under the inscription "the weak" there would be ten ready to stand under the name and inscription of "the strong." As to self-pleasing, it is never good in any case whatever. (1) It is of the essence of sin. (2) It always tends to meanness of character. (3) It tends to corruption, just as the stagnant water becomes unfit for use. (4) It always inflicts injury and misery on others. (5) It is enormously difficult to the self that is always seeking to be pleased, so difficult, in fact, as to be ultimately quite impossible of realisation.

II. If not ourselves, then whom? "Let every one of us please his neighbour." But here comes a difficulty, and yet no great difficulty when we look at it more fully. It is this. If the neighbour is to be pleased by me, why should not the neighbour please me in return? If there is to be an obligation at all, it must surely be mutual. Here is the safeguard in the passage itself. "I am to please my neighbour *for his good* to edification." The one of these words explains the other. "Good to edification" means good in the spiritual sense, religious good; the building up of the character in spiritual life. That is to be the end and aim of any compliance with his wishes that may be made. We are both to borrow, each from each, and then act for the best. If the spirit be good, there will be but little of practical difficulty in settling the limits of concession—in each pleasing his neighbour for his good to edification.

III. To help us to do this we ought to consider much and deeply the example of Christ. When He was here He never spared Himself. He never chose the easier way, never waited for the weather, never postponed the doing of a duty. Here is an example, high and glorious, and yet near, and human, and touching. And we are to do as He did, and be as He was. Even Christ pleased not Himself.

A. RALEIGH, *The Little Sanctuary*, p. 176.

REFERENCES: xv. 2.—S. A. Tipple, *Sunday Mornings at Upper*

Norwood, p. 250; H. W. Beecher, *Forty-eight Sermons*, vol. i., p. 22; G. Litting, *Thirty Children's Sermons*, p. 1; J. Vaughan, *Children's Sermons*, 6th series, p. 39.

Chap. xv., vers. 2, 3.

CHRIST not Pleasing Himself—Christian and Social Tolerance.

I. Note, first, the rule of forbearance as laid down by the Apostle. We have to learn that, within the limits of what is not positively wrong, every one has the right to be himself, to develop his own nature in his own way, and that he cannot be forced into the mould of another without losing his capacity of highest enjoyment, and his power and greatest usefulness to his fellow-men. Our duty under God is to be true to our own nature, but to grant this privilege also to every other, and where we seek to influence them to do it in accordance with the laws of their nature. The question may arise here again, Is there no limit to our self-surrender? and it is pointed out. We are to please our neighbour "for his good to edification." This is the end, and the end prescribes the limit. Our great object must be not to please our neighbour any more than to please ourselves, but to do him the highest good, and gain an influence that may lead up to truth and duty and God.

II. This forbearance is illustrated by Christ's example. To prove the disinterested forbearance of Christ, Paul cites a passage that shows His self-devotion to God. He offered Himself to bear the reproach cast on that great name, and thought nothing of self if the honour of God was maintained. There is a broad principle taught us here also—viz., that right action toward men flows naturally from right feeling toward God. If self-pleasing has been sacrificed on the Divine altar, it has received its death-blow in every other form. He who has truly, deeply, entirely given up his will to God is not the man to force it harshly and capriciously on his fellow-men. This is what the Apostle would have us infer regarding Christ in His human bearings. The forbearance of Christ is illustrated (1) in the variety of character which His earthly life drew around it; (2) He interposed to defend others when they were interfered with.

III. Note the advantages that would result from acting on this principle. If we wish those we are influencing to become valuable for anything, it must be by permitting them to be themselves. This is the only way in which we can hope to make our fellow-creatures truly our own. And in pursuing such a course we shall best succeed in elevating and broadening our own nature. JOHN KER, *Sermons*, p. 197.

Chap. xv., ver. 4.—"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

WHAT is the true purpose of Holy Scripture? Why was it written? St. Paul replies, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." And what kind of learning? we ask. St. Paul answers again, "That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have, not merely information, but hope." Scripture, then, is a manual of moral or spiritual learning. It is addressed to the heart and to the will, as well as, or rather than, to the intellect.

I. We need hope. Hope is the nerve—it is the backbone—of all true life, of all serious efforts to battle with evil, and to live for God. For the majority of men, especially as the years pass, life is made up of the disheartening; the sunshine of the early years has gone. The evening is shrouded already with clouds and disappointment. Failure, sorrow, the sense of a burden of past sin, the presentiment of approaching death—these things weigh down the spirit of multitudes. Something is needed which shall lift men out of this circle of depressing thought—something which shall enlarge our horizon, which shall enable us to find in the future that which the present has ceased to yield. And here the Bible helps us as no other book can. It stands alone as the warrant and the stimulant of hope; it speaks with a Divine authority; it opens out a future which no human authority could attest. There are many human books which do what they can in this direction; but they can only promise something better than what we have at present on this side the grave. The Bible is pre-eminently the book of hope. In it God draws the veil which hangs between man and his awful future, and bids him take heart and arise and live.

II. Those who will may find, in Holy Scripture, patience, consolation, hope, not in its literary or historical features, but in the great truths which it reveals about God, about our incarnate Lord, about man—in the great examples it holds forth of patience and of victory, in the great promises it repeats, in the future which it unfolds to the eye of faith, is this treasure to be found. H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 848.

Chap. xv., ver. 4.—"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning."

PRACTICAL Use of the Old Testament.

Consider some of the departments of Christian knowledge, for which the study of the Old Testament Scriptures is requisite

I. The history of the chosen people of God is very full of needful instruction for us. The seed of Abraham were selected as the vehicle of God's will, and ultimately of the blessings of redemption to the world. But they were also selected for the great lesson to be read to all ages, that the revelation of a moral law of precepts and ordinances never could save mankind. And this fact is one abundantly commented on in the New Testament. A man is equally incapacitated from reading the Gospels and the Acts to much purpose--from appreciating the relative position of our Lord and the Jews in the one, or the Apostles and the Jews in the other—without being fairly read in the Old Testament.

II. Again, one very large and important region of assurance of our faith will be void without a competent knowledge of the prophetical books of the Old Testament. It is only by being familiar with such portions of God's Word that we have any chance of recognising their undoubted fulfilment, when it arrives as a thing announced to us for our instruction and caution. If God has really given these announcements of futurity to His Church, it cannot be for us who are lying in His hands—the creatures of what a day may bring forth—to neglect them or cast them aside.

III. As an example of life the ancient Scriptures are exceedingly rich and valuable to the Christian.

IV. The direct devotional use of the ancient Scriptures is no mean element in the nurture of the Christian spirit. They are full of the breathings of the souls of holy men of God; full also of the words of life, spoken by Him to the soul. Search the Old Testament Scriptures, for they are they that testify of Christ. To find Him in them is the true and legitimate end of their study. To be able to interpret them as He interpreted them is the best result of all Biblical learning.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. v., p. 260.

THE Scriptures Bearing Witness.

St. Paul is here speaking of things in the Old Testament respecting Christ. They are there written, he says, that we may dwell and ponder on the same, as seeing how they have been fulfilled in Him; and, so being supported and comforted by them, may have hope. But as the inspired Scriptures are of no avail unless God Himself, who gave them, enlighten us, he takes up the same words of "patience and consolation," and proceeds: "Now the God of patience and consolation grant

you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," that God may shed abroad His peace in our hearts, and that His peace may make us at peace with each other; and so, having love to each other, we may render to God acceptable praise and united worship. This, the firstfruits of the Word and of the Spirit, must be by brotherly kindness, uniting Jew and Gentile, bond and free, rich and poor, fragrant as the sacred ointment, and, as the dew from heaven, rich in blessing. "Wherefore receive ye one another," he adds, "as Christ also received us to the glory of God."

II. St. Paul then returns to the fulfilment of the Scriptures, showing how the law and the prophets were in Christ altogether accomplished; inasmuch as He fulfilled the righteousness of the law, was the object of its types, the substance of its shadows, and as such the Apostle and High Priest to the Hebrews; and, according to the same Scripture throughout, was to bring the Gentiles to the obedience of faith, that there might be one fold and one Shepherd. The Epistle for the day ends as it begins, with hope as resting on the Scriptures, as strengthened by the fulfilment of them, as imparted by the God of all hope; and this hope is that blessed hope of seeing Christ soon return, and of being accepted by Him. Many and various are the signs of approaching summer, and manifold, in like manner, will be the tokens of Christ's last Advent which the good will notice—will notice with joy and comfort, as a sick man does the coming on of summer. No light hath been as the light of that day will be; no darkness that we know of will be like that which it brings. O day of great reality and truth! all things are shadows and dreams when compared to thee, and the falling of sun, moon, and stars in the great tribulation will be but as a light affliction, which is but for a moment, compared with thee, like clouds that break away when the sun appears!

I. WILLIAMS, *The Epistles and Gospels*, vol. i., p. 1.

I. THERE is no book which requires such constant, such daily study, as the Bible. Regard it first merely on what one might call its human side, and quite apart from the fact that it is the wisdom not of man but of God. Scripture is not a *hortus siccus*, where you can at once find everything you want to find, labelled and ticketed and put away into our drawers; it is a glorious wilderness of sweets, in which under higher guidance you must

gradually learn to find your way and discover one by one the beauties it contains, but which is very far from obtruding upon every careless observer. Assume for an instant that Scripture differs in no essential thing from the highest works of human intellect and genius, and then, as other books demand patience and study before they give up their secrets, can it be expected that this book, or rather this multitude of books, should not demand the same?

II. But regard the Scripture in its proper dignity with those higher claims which it has upon us as the message of God to sinful man, and then it will be still more manifest that only the constant and diligent student can hope to possess himself of any considerable portion of the treasures which it contains. For what indeed is Scripture? Men uttered it, but men who were moved thereto by the Holy Ghost. It is the wisdom of God. If all Scripture is by inspiration of God, and all Scripture profitable for instruction in righteousness, must not all Scripture, putting aside a very few chapters indeed, be the object of our most diligent search?

III. Let us read, (1) looking for Christ—Christ in the Old Testament quite as much as in the New. (2) With personal application, for Scripture is like a good portrait, which wherever we move appears to have eyes on us still. (3) Whatever we learn out of God's Holy Word, let us seek in our lives to fulfil the same and strive to bring both the outward course and inward spirit of our lives into closer and more perfect agreement with what there we search.

R. C. TRENCH, *Sermons New and Old*, p. 267.

REFERENCES: xv. 4.—H. P. Liddon, *Advent Sermons*, vol. i., p. 248; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 204.

Chap. xv., vers. 4, 13.

THE Twofold Genealogy of Hope.

I. We have here the hope that is the child of the night and born in the dark. "Whatsoever things," says the Apostle, "were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience"—or rather, the *brave perseverance*—"and consolation"—or rather, perhaps *encouragement*—"of the Scriptures might have hope." The written word is conceived to be the source of patient endurance which acts as well as suffers. This grace Scripture works in us through the encouragement it ministers in manifold ways, and the result of both is hope. Scripture encourages us, (1) by its records, and (2) by its

revelation of principles. Hope is born of sorrow; but darkness gives birth to the light, and every grief blazes up a witness to a future glory. Sorrow has not had its perfect work unless it has led us by the way of courage and perseverance to a stable hope. Hope has not pierced to the rock and builds only on things that can be shaken, unless it rests on sorrows borne by God's help.

II. We have also a hope that is born of the day, the child of sunshine and gladness, and that is set before us in the second of the two verses which we are considering. "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope." (1) Faith leads to joy and peace. Paul has found, and if we only put it to the proof we shall also find, that the simple exercise of simple faith fills the soul with all joy and peace. (2) The joy and peace which spring from faith in their turn produce the confident anticipation of future and progressive good. Herein lies the distinguishing blessedness of the Christian joy and peace, in that they carry in themselves the pledge of their own eternity. Here, and here only, the mad boast which is doomed to be so miserably falsified when applied to earthly gladness is simple truth. Here "to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." Such joy has nothing in itself which betokens exhaustion, as all the less pure joys of earth have. It is manifestly not born for death, as are they. It is not fated, like all earthly emotions or passions, to expire in the moment of its completeness, or even by sudden revulsion to be succeeded by its opposite. Its sweetness has no after-pang of bitterness. It is not true of this gladness that "Hereof cometh in the end despondency and madness," but its destiny is to remain as long as the soul in which it unfolds shall exist, and to be full as long as the source from which it flows does not run dry.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, June 24th, 1886.

REFERENCE: xv. 13.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 240.

Chap. xv., ver. 29.—"And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

CHRISTIAN Confidence.

Consider the sources of our confidence in our Christian influence.

I. There is the constancy of Christ Himself. The constancy of Christ is as much an article of our confidence as His beneficence. His image in the gospel story is that of one

without variableness or shadow of turning When He was on earth, not weariness, nor want, nor scorn, nor cruelty, nor the neglect of His people, nor the imperfections of His disciples, could shake His fidelity, or change the current of His unvarying grace. And now that He has passed away from the gloom and trouble of earth into the serene air of heaven; now that He has laid aside the weakness of humanity, while He retains manhood's tender sympathy and helpful purpose; now that He has established His kingdom in the world and only lives to direct and to advance it; what room is there for fears of His inconstancy to cross and cloud our souls? We have no such fears. We rise into the region of certainty whenever we approach the Saviour.

II. Christ is not only the object of Christian trust; He is the spirit of the Christian life. The measure of our Christian confidence determines the measure of our Christian usefulness; spiritual influence is only the outward side of Christian character. The heart prepares its own reception. We take with us the atmosphere in which we mix with others. Nothing can finally withstand the affectionate purpose of benediction, the spirit that, daunted or undaunted, cries still, "I have blessed thee, and thou shalt be blessed." The fact that we have human souls to deal with, each one wrapped in its own experience, often wayward, often perverse, can no more avail than our consciousness of our own imperfection and instability, to suppress the confidence of Christian believers: "I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

A. MACKENNAL, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 284.

REFERENCES: xv. 29.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 6th series, p. 1; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 1. xv. 33.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 293. xvi. 7.—E. Garbett, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 51. xvi. 10.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p 426. xvi. 23.—A. Maclaren, *Week-day Evening Addresses*, p. 124.

Chap. xvi., ver. 27.

THE Doxologies of Scripture.

I. There are two things included in a doxology—the expression of a wish and the performance of a duty. Their essential features are these: (1) They are always and exclusively addressed to God; (2) the mind of the writer fastens specially on some aspect of the Divine character, some attribute or group of attributes, as the foundation of His claim to universal and perpetual praise.

II. While the sacred writers no doubt recognised the proofs of Divine wisdom, furnished by the works of nature and the movements of Providence, their minds were habitually fastened on the method of salvation taught in Scripture as the grand and decisive proof by which all others are surpassed and superseded. It was through Christ, not only as the brightness of God's glory and the image of His person, but as a Saviour, a propitiation set forth by God Himself, a means devised and provided by Him for the accomplishment of what appeared impossible; it was through Christ, considered in this light, that the lustre of God's wisdom shone in dazzling brightness upon Paul and John and Peter. The simplest and most obvious explanation of the words "through Christ" is that Christ is the medium through which the Divine glory is and must be glorified. Not only does He share by right of His Divinity in all the Divine honours, not only by His mediation and atoning passion does He furnish the most luminous display of Divine wisdom; but as Head of the Church and as the Father of a spiritual seed, to whom that wisdom is and ever will be an object of adoring admiration; and as their ever-living and prevailing Intercessor with the Father, He is the means, the instrument, the channel through which everlasting glory shall be given to the only wise God, who has established a Church, and caused the gospel to be preached for that very purpose, "that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God; unto Him be glory in the Church by Jesus Christ, through all ages, world without end. Amen."

J. A. ALEXANDER, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, p. 133.

REFERENCE: xvi. 30-32.—G. BROOKS, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 213

I. CORINTHIANS.

References: i. 1.—A. Scott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 202. i. 1-3.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 11. i. 1-14.—*Ibid.*, p. 262. i. 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 434; J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 254; F. W. Farrar, *Everyday Christian Life*, p. 128. i. 3.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 51; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 421. i. 4.—J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 391. i. 4-7.—C. Kingsley, *All Saints' Day*, p. 190; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 148. i. 4-8.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., pp. 171, 189. i. 4-10.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 21. i. 5.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 144. i. 6.—Spurgeon, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2239. i. 6-8.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 171. i. 7.—H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *The Children's Bread*, p. 1.

Chap. i., vers. 7, 8.

Waiting for Christ.

I. St. Paul had found the Corinthians in great darkness of mind, worshipping many different gods, of whom they had different fancies and notions, worshipping the goddess of Pleasure above all. They had a dream of some God, some Father, some Friend; at times they fancied these gods to whom they were doing homage were likenesses of Him, His children to whom He had given power in various places and over various things. But then it seemed to them that there was more evil than good in the world, and that these powers must oftener mean evil to them than good, and that He from whom they got their power must be harder and sterner than they were, and must design worse and more terrible mischief to the creatures He had formed. The Corinthians believed the Apostle's gospel; they renounced their idols. They found that there was a love stronger than the evil that was in them, stronger than the evil that was in their brethren—one which could convert the most rebellious to itself. But still the world was full of misery. There was the tyranny of the Roman empire established over the great part of it; in each particular country and neighbourhood there were crimes, divisions, and oppressions.

II. Besides believing, then, the Corinthians had need to hope and to wait. What had they to hope and wait for? That He

who had been declared to be the Deliverer of the world, who had proved Himself so by dying for it, who was proving Himself so in their hearts, would come forth, would declare Himself to be the King of kings and Lord of lords, would put down the wrong, would establish the right. To work for this, to wait for this, was, the Apostle tells them, the best thing for them, one and all.

III. So it was with the Corinthians. Why is it to be different with us? We have heard that Christ is the great Deliverer and King. Every event that has happened in any nation of the earth, any great judgment that has befallen it, any great deliverance that has been wrought for it, has been a day of the Lord, an appearing of Christ, a proof that He is in deed, and not in name only, our Sovereign. Christ's light is about us at this moment; we need not wait for that till another day; we may come to it; we may ask Him to scatter the darkness that is in us now.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons in Country Churches*, p. 29.

REFERENCES: i. 12.—G. Salmon, *Non-Miraculous Christianity*, p. 50. i. 13.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 166; H. P. Liddon, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 379; *Ibid.*, *Easter Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 224; *Ibid.*, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1113. i. 14-22.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 28.

Chap. i., ver. 17.—"Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

WHAT makes the Cross of Christ of none effect?

I. The making it identical with the crucifix, as though the Cross of Christ were nothing more than His crucifixion.

II. The exhibition of false doctrine and of speculation concerning the Cross of Christ.

III. The exhibition of the Cross of Christ without a personal recognition of its claim.

IV. The multiplication and complication of the requirements of the Cross of Christ.

V. Lack of faith in the power of the Cross.

VI. The use of the Cross for objects foreign to itself.

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 1st series, p. 198.

REFERENCES: i. 17.—J. Oswald Dykes, *Sermons*, p. 20. i. 17, 18.—A. J. Parry, *Phases of Truth*, p. 104.

Chap. i., ver. 18.—"For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

THE Two Paths.

These phrases, "Them that are perishing," "Us which are being saved," have not in themselves to do with the final state

of the persons spoken of, not with the state when religious truth has been finally accepted or rejected, but rather with the anterior condition, their condition when it is preached to them, the condition of which their accepting or rejecting it is a test or an incident.

I. St. Paul divides the world into two classes, not in respect of their ultimate destiny,—he did not pretend at this moment to look on to that,—but in respect of their present state, their state when religious truth was set before them, and when the question was how they would look on it. The one class were in the way of safety, of progress, making the best of themselves, rising ever to things higher and better; the other class were in the way of ruin, going to waste, undoing themselves, going farther from God and happiness and life. And to these two classes, he said, religious truth comes with exactly opposite results. The one class recognise and welcome the good, can see moral beauty, have tender consciences, and unspoilt hearts; the other class are blind to heavenly outlines—they see no difference between them and coarse and clumsy imitations of fraud. "The Cross to them is foolishness."

II. We may ruin ourselves. There is no doubt or limitation there. We may be doing so, beginning to tread that dreadful path already. And in a sense we may *save ourselves*, but not in the same full sense. Walk dutifully with God, trust Him, come back to Him whenever you have offended, however deeply, and *He will save you*, save you daily, give you ever more and more of life and peace and happiness, till the struggle and risk is over and heaven is won.

E. C. WICKHAM, *Wellington College Sermons*, p. 240.

REFERENCES: i. 18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1611; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 212; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 190; T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 1; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 94; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 10th series, p. 23.

Chap. i., ver. 21.—"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

I. WHAT was the preaching referred to in the text? The word might fairly be rendered "the truth preached," for St. Paul is not thinking of the action and process of announcement, but of the message announced. In his eyes mere discourse or oratory, irrespective of the claims of the subject on which it was employed, would have had no charm or dignity whatever. The world was saved by the substance of a message from

heaven, not by the human words that conveyed it. Now, one leading characteristic of the apostolical preaching which gave it its saving power was its positive and definite character. Resting on solid evidence, planting its feet firmly on the soil of earth, and in the full daylight of human history, the Christian creed raised its head to heaven, unveiled to the believer the inner being of God, displayed the manner in which when God the Son took our nature upon Him a bridge was really constructed between earth and heaven, and even discovered to us the inmost heart of the All Merciful in the true meaning and value of the Sacrifice which was offered on Calvary for the sins of the whole world. From that fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness flow all the hopes of pardon, all the reinforcements of grace, all the power of sacraments, by which the work of the Redeemer is carried forward in the sphere of sense and time, in preparation for the momentous, the endless future.

II. Of this preaching, what was the object? St. Paul answers, "To save them that believe." When the Apostle speaks of salvation, he means a salvation of the individual human soul from ruin, ruin begun here and rendered beyond the grave permanent and irretrievable, salvation from eternal death. And the preaching of the apostles presented Christ to men, in St. Paul's phrase, as evidently set forth crucified among them, as their Saviour, as their all-sufficient Saviour, able to save to the utmost those that come unto God by Him.

III. Who are capable of receiving this salvation? "Them that believe." As a matter of fact, then, the recipients of salvation are a limited class. Belief is, in its essence, the act by which the soul accepts salvation. This belief is a movement of the whole soul, of all its powers going forth to meet the appointed truth; it is thought, it is affection, it is trust, it is self-surrender, face to face with the unseen, but clearly apprehended, Christ. Faith does not, cannot of itself, save; but faith is the hand which we hold out to receive the salvation which is wrought for us, and which we must thus receive in this our hand in order to make it our own.

H. P. LIDDON, *Family Churchman*, July 28th, 1886.

REFERENCES: i. 21.—J. Hunter, *Story of Daniel*, p. 39; J. B. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 200. i. 21-3.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 47; H. Allon, *Sermons in Union Chapel, Islington*, p. 40; *Homilist*, vol. ii., p. 1. i. 22.—J. B. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 225. i. 22-4.—Magee, *The Gospel and the Age*, p. 1; Beecher, *Sermons*, 1870, p. 261; R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 45; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 539.

i. 22-5.—*Homilist*, vol. ii., p. 339. i. 23.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Christian Year*, vol. ii., p. 119; T. R. Stevenson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 246. i. 23, 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., Nos. 7, 8; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 92; *Ibid.*, vol. xviii., p. 340; W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, pp. 120, 134; F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 83; W. J. Knox-Little, *The Mystery of the Passion*, p. 85; J. Oswald Dykes, *Sermons*, p. 34; Bishop Stubbs, *The Anglican Pulpit of To-day*, p. 49. i. 23-5.—C. Kingsley, *Town and Country Sermons*, p. 408. i. 23-30.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 406. i. 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 132; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 186; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 85; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 377. i. 26.—H. Phillips, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 358; *Saturday Evening*, p. 247. i. 26-9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 587. i. 26-31.—A. J. Parry, *Phases of Truth*, p. 133. i. 27.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 25; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 165. i. 28-31.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 377.

Chap. i., ver. 30.—**"Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."**

CHRIST the Source of all Blessings.

I. St. Paul seems to have had in his mind a conception of the gradual growth of the Christian spirit under the hand of Christ, from its dawn of grace to its final fulfilment in glory. He seems to view Christ as the great Dispenser of the Father's treasures, accumulating gifts upon the believer's soul until it brightens into the very image of Himself; to view it rising higher and higher, as it is drawn nearer and nearer to Him, till the crisis of the final redemption is come and it is lost from the eye, hidden beyond the clouds. The words are as the ladder to the Patriarch's vision, "set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it."

II. Wisdom—the apprehension of the true and Divine knowledge—is the first stage on the path of peace; the clearing of the eye of reason for the prospect itself of eternity and of God. Christ is here declared to be made unto us wisdom, not so much because He is the Giver of wisdom as because He is the ground and object of it; not so much because He declares to us the truth as because He *is* the truth. He gives us knowledge in giving us Himself. The "righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" are ingredients of the wisdom. Christ is our wisdom in being to us these things: that is, He is the prime object of all true wisdom inasmuch as He is the source of all true blessedness.

III. Weigh well the force of the expression "is made unto us." *As one with Christ* we obtain the whole inheritance of grace and glory. The instant that we are incorporated into the mystical body of which He is the Head, that instant we possess the seed of the entire life of the Christian—yea, all his eternity is but the less or greater development of the Christ he bears within, around, and upon him. To receive Him is to receive the germ of every blessing that is written in the book of God.

W. ARCHER BUTLER, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 1.

REFERENCES: i. 30.—W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 376; R. S. Candlish, *The Gospel of Forgiveness*, p. 301; *Homilist*, new series, vol. i., p. 240; *Ibid.*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 240; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 271.

Chap. i., vers. 30, 31.—"Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," etc.

RIGHTEOUSNESS not of Us, but in Us.

In every age of the Church, not in the primitive age only, Christians have been tempted to pride themselves on their gifts, or at least to forget that they were gifts, and to take them for granted. Ever have they been tempted to forget their own responsibilities, their having received what they are bound to improve, and the duty of fear and trembling while improving it. One of the first elements of knowledge and a Christian spirit is to refer all that is good in us, all that we have of spiritual life and righteousness, to Christ our Saviour; to believe that He works in us, or, to put the same thing more pointedly, to believe that saving truth, life, light, and holiness are not *of* us, though they must be *in* us.

I. Whatever we have is not of us, but of God. This is that great truth which is at the foundation of all true doctrine as to the way of salvation. All teaching about duty and obedience, about attaining heaven, and about the office of Christ towards us, is hollow and unsubstantial, which is not built *here*, in the doctrine of our original corruption and helplessness; and in consequence, of original guilt and sin.

II. While truth and righteousness are not of us, it is quite as certain that they are also in us if we be Christ's; not merely nominally given to us and imputed to us, but really implanted in us by the office of the Blessed Spirit. Let us never forget this great and simple view, which the whole of Scripture sets before us. What was actually done by Christ in the flesh

eighteen hundred years ago is in type and resemblance really wrought in us one by one even to the end of time. Christ Himself vouchsafes to repeat in each of us in figure and mystery all that He did and suffered in the flesh. He is formed in us, born in us, suffers in us, rises again in us, lives in us; and this not by a succession of events, but all at once; for He comes to us as a Spirit, all dying, all rising again, all living. We are ever receiving our birth, our justification, our renewal, ever dying to sin, ever rising to righteousness. His whole economy in all its parts is ever in us all at once; and this Divine presence constitutes the title of each of us to heaven; this is what He will acknowledge and accept at the last day. As the king's image appropriates the coin to him, so the likeness of Christ in us separates us from the world and assigns us over to the kingdom of heaven.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. v., p. 128.

REFERENCES: i. 30, 31.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 991. i. 31.—*Ibid.*, vol. xx., No. 1178; *Saturday Evening*, p. 260. ii. 1, 2.—W. Morley Punshon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 168; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 1870, pp. 448, 465. ii. 1-5.—*Ibid.*, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 148; W. Baxendale, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 364, vol. xxx., p. 168. ii. 1-7.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 36.

Chap. ii., ver. 2.—"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

I. APART from the crucifixion of our Lord, there was much in Jesus Christ to commend Him both to the Jew and to the Gentile. There was no need for the introduction of that which was such a stumbling-block to the one and such foolishness to the other. The Apostle preaching Christ to the Jews might have dwelt upon the fact that He was one of their own nation, that this certainly very great and wonderful man, this worker of miracles, evidently sent from God, was one of themselves, a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," and a great honour to their race. He might further have told the Jews how Jesus had reverenced the law of Moses; how religiously He had observed the Sabbaths and the feasts; how He had referred to the Scriptures and told people to search them; and how He had said, "I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil." And speaking about Jesus Christ to Greeks and other Gentiles, the Apostle might have pointed to the fact that our Lord was Himself a very loyal subject of the Gentile government then existing in

His country. With so much else to testify concerning our Lord, why should the apostles speak so much of His crucifixion?

II. Now, I think we may answer thus: that as men of common sense—to claim for them nothing more—the apostles would never have adopted this course unless they had been convinced that there was something of special and extraordinary importance in the death of their Master; something really more important in His death than in anything that had taken place during the whole course of His life. They believed—and their Master had told them to believe—that His death was to be the life of the world; and on this account, and this account only, can we understand or reconcile with good sense the immense predominance which is everywhere given to the sufferings and death of our Lord.

III. If the apostles had not preached the doctrine of the Cross, and had not made Christ crucified the great theme of their ministry, you and I would never have heard of Christianity at all. They might have preached Christ's noble example, they might have referred much to His discourses and the beauty of His character; but if they had not preached the Cross, and salvation through the sacrifice of the Cross, their preaching would have been forgotten on the road. Christ crucified is a truth that never can come amiss, and of which too much never can be said.

H. Stowell Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii. p. 289.

The Exaltation of the Cross.

I. The great truth which the Apostle had to impress on the Corinthians was, that in spite of their sinfulness and alienation they were still beloved by the one true God. And how better could he do this than by displaying the Cross? The greater the humiliation to which the Son of God submitted, the greater is the demonstration of the Divine love to man. This it is which, as an immortal being and yet a sinful, I have most interest in ascertaining, and this it is in which, if once ascertained, I have most cause to exult. Come, then, a teacher to those sunk in heathenism, and what shall he teach? One may go and tell them of their being objects of God's providence, fed by His bounty, guided by His light, and curtained by His shadows. Another may tell them of their having been made after His image, endowed with immortality, illuminated by reason. I would not be insensible to the excellence of such teaching, to the beauty of these proofs of the love of the Creator; but feeling

that these heathen are in danger of eternal destruction, and knowing that the sacrifice made on their behalf is such as irresistibly proves that God so loved them as to do everything to save them except to dishonour Himself, give me a teacher who would exclaim with the Apostle, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

II. Although to the eye of sense there is nothing but shame about the Cross, yet spiritual discernment proves it to be hung with the very richest trophies. Christ triumphed by being apparently defeated, He vanquished in the act of yielding to the enemy, and therefore was His death glorious, aye, unspeakably more glorious than life, array it how you will with circumstances of honour.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1745.

REFERENCES: ii. 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1264; A. Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 1; A. Saphir, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 385; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 42; F. W. Aveling, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 100; E. W. Shalders, *Ibid.*, vol. xxv. p. 219; Cartwright, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 117; E. M. Goulburn, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 374; Deems, *American Pulpit of To-day*, p. 161. ii. 2-5.—H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 1870, p. 1. ii. 4.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 359. ii. 5.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 340; *Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 340; J. Van Dyke, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 156.

Chap. ii., ver. 6 to end.—"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery," etc.

MYSTERY Revealed.

I. The redemption of Jesus Christ is a great mystery of the Divine thought and heart. The Apostle uses a singular term to designate those to whom the revelation is made. "We speak wisdom," he says, "among them that are perfect,"—among those who have qualifications for receiving the wisdom. Spiritual religion is utterly incomprehensible to many intelligent people. They can understand theology as a science of God; they can understand religion as a theory, but they have no conception of its spiritual character; they have no conception of it as a spiritual sentiment, as a passionate affection, as a fellowship with God, a yearning and joy of the man's whole consciousness. This is what St. Paul means when he says—"The natural man discerneth not the things of the spirit"; they are discerned only by a spiritual faculty. This, then, is what is meant when it is said that the gospel of Christ is wisdom unto the perfect—that

is, to the spiritual, to the susceptible, to the spiritual man with spiritual faculties.

II. The mission of Christ and the purpose of Christian teaching are to reveal this mystery to men—to men of spiritual faculty, to men whom the Spirit of God touches and teaches. Our poor human thoughts cannot compass infinite things. All religion runs up into the mysterious, and must do so. Apart from Christianity, the mystery of the Divine Being is just as inscrutable as the revelation of Jesus Christ. Instead of adding to the mystery of God, Jesus Christ gives us our highest understanding of God. We understand more of God through Jesus Christ than we can on any other theory. And yet even so, how much remains that is impenetrable! Who can fathom the mystery of the incarnation, the mystery of the atonement, the mystery of the quickening of spiritual life in men, the mystery even of moral feeling, moral principle, the working of moral life, the mystery of conscience, which is the consciousness of God? In the love of Christ, in the love of God, there are heights and depths that pass knowledge.

H. ALLON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 97.

REFERENCE: ii. 6, 7.—W. C. Magee, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 257.

Chap. ii., vers. 6-16.

THE Gospel and the Intellect.

I. The natural man in Paul's eyes is like an undeveloped organism. A man as he grows, in the true sense of growing, as he attains his full stature or perfection, becomes spiritual. The natural man is stunted; growth has been in some abnormal way arrested. The natural man only exists to become the spiritual man, just as a chrysalis only exists to become a butterfly. Who are the natural men nowadays? (1) Those who tell us that matter can explain spirit—the people whom we call Materialists. They cannot apprehend the wisdom of the gospel. (2) Those who speak as of the understanding could answer all the questions and meet all the needs of the human spirit.

II. The wisdom which Paul speaks among the perfect is nothing less than the indwelling of the Spirit of God in the spirit of the Christian man. Just as consciousness alone can be aware of our own inward life, so God's consciousness alone can understand the depths of God; and only by being made partakers of God's consciousness can we search those depths. But we

as believers in Christ, are partakers of that consciousness. A Spirit of God given to a man through faith in the incarnate Son of God takes all the things of the revealing Christ—His person, His word, His work—and slowly unveils them to the amazed and enraptured heart. He who is the Saviour is also the key to creation.

III. Paul found in the good news of the gospel a wisdom far surpassing the wisdom of this world. Many Christians do not exercise the reason, and have no special desire for its satisfaction. But those who dare not in honesty suppress or violate that master-faculty are permitted to have the thirst quenched, the reason satisfied. In Christ, the manifestation of God, they find certain things which are revealed, they find a clue to God, a clue to life, a clue to the world. The mystery is an open mystery, though losing none of its charm.

R. F. HORTON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 317.

REFERENCES: ii. 9.—G. Huntington, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, 2nd series, p. 23; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 249; Bishop Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 143.

Chap. ii., vers. 9, 10.—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," etc.

I. IN the text we have the revelation given us as to the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. There seems to be wonderful beauty and expressiveness in this thought of the preparation God makes for His children, showing the Divine forethought, and the infinite fulness and carefulness of the love that has them in its regard, and that prepares for them things that are yet to come in the blessings that are bestowed upon them now; to remember how in the creation the world was prepared before man came upon it, and all its beauty and grandeur were ready to receive the crowning illustration of God's creative power that was found in man, whose brow bore the image of the Divine presence.

II. But now we turn for a moment to the revelation of the Spirit in which these things are made manifest to us. "God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit." Let the ministry of God the Holy Spirit be acknowledged and honoured. It is in proportion as individuals or as churches honour the Holy Spirit that we shall be prospered in the Divine work, that we shall be made strong for labour, wise for difficulty, comforted in sorrow, triumphant in all endeavour, and rejoicing in all things in the grace and glory of our Lord.

III. But then there is the third point of the condition that is essential to this, in the character of those who are to be the recipients of the blessing which God hath prepared for them that love Him. If we are children of God and disciples of Jesus Christ we ought to seek after the love that shall put the lovely into the unlovable, as the grace of God does with us. It is one of the most grievous mistakes about Christian fellowship that people are ever expecting to be loved, instead of seeking to love. We shall never have true Christian fellowship in the Church except as every one seeks to love the rest, and then all are sure to be loved and every one to be loved by all, because all realise the blessing of the indwelling Christ, of the Spirit of God, and the love that is imparted thereby.

J. P. CHOWN, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 273.

THE Story of the Cross.

I. It is true of all the great tragedies which affect mankind that they owe their power to the spiritual element in them, to the depth and truth of the ideas which they bring in living substance before our eyes. And the story of the Cross is the supreme tragedy of life, the sorrow which is like no other sorrow, but yet is the type of all sorrows; the victory in which all victory is contained, in which all the agonies, hopes, aspirations of human nature find their explanation, fulfilment, and relief. The spiritual element in it is the whole of it. The outer story is necessary to the inward truth; but without the key it would be futile, meaningless. Who invented that key? Who invented the ideas which lie at the bottom of that story, which, if they are true, make it intelligible, credible, the source of life and peace, hope and renovation without end, but which, if they are baseless, a figment of the human brain, make it an idle tale, a purposeless fragment from the story of human cruelty and human credulity?

II. We may distinguish three ideas on which, beyond others, the truth of that story rests. These are immortality, sin, the fatherhood of God. Can we believe that any of these is the baseless creation of the human fancy? What a picture to have been imagined!—a picture of which not merely the special combinations are due to human fancy, but of which the materials must in that case be due also—a picture too beautiful, infinitely too beautiful, to be true. Is it not more reasonable to believe with the Apostle that as in the world of sense, so in the things which touch our life more closely, our imagination instead of

exceeding, falls far short of the wonders of Divine provision; that God has prepared for them that love Him not less, but infinitely more, than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or than has entered into the heart of man?

E. C. WICKHAM, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 360.

REFERENCES: ii. 9, 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 56; Bishop Westcott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 193; D. Rhys Jenkins, *The Eternal Life*, p. 183. ii. 10.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 292.

Chap. ii., ver. 11.—"What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

I. To give the adequate history of a religion you must first have believed it. This is our primary datum, and this means surely that the elements of that rational intelligibility, which comes to the surface under the action of the critical reason, are to be found *within* the living material of the belief itself. Reason does not find its ground, its justification, its credibility, its evidence in itself, in its own separate and distinct working; it goes for these to that on which it works. There lies all its intelligibility. The gain achieved by the reason is simply the disclosure that the belief was already rational. All that it discloses was already the life and substance of that effort which we call faith.

II. What an immense task has reason undertaken when it attempts the critical portrayal of a spiritual faith. Yet if religion is the expression, the act of the entire man, and not merely of some peculiar and isolated organ in his being, it is inevitable that reason which is part and parcel of that wholeness which is the man, should have its say about that action in which it itself in its corporate capacity, as bound up with the unity of spirit, has already borne its share. "To write the history of a religion a man must have believed it *once*." Yes, and if it be needful once, then if the criticism is ever to be other than fragmentary, if it is ever to be vital and fruitful and entire, it cannot but be needful always; for to have lost the belief is, as the formula confesses, to have lost the key to its history. It is surely only in sad irony, bitter mistrust, that it is added, "he must have believed it once, but he must have believed it no longer."

H. SCOTT HOLLAND, *Logic and Life*, p. 41.

REFERENCES: ii. 11.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 7th series, p. 191. ii. 12.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 264; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 125; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascensiontide to Trinity*, p. 209. ii. 13.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 94.

Chap. ii., ver. 14.—"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

THE Spiritual Life.

I. If we cast our eyes over the world of human things, it cannot fail to strike us that there are certain inevitable classifications of mankind depending immediately upon the constitution of human nature. Thus you may classify men by their bodily gifts and graces, distinguishing them as the strong and vigorous, on the one hand, who scarcely know the meaning of pain or bodily weakness, who would scorn to ask if this present life, which is to them so glad a thing, be worth the living; and on the other hand, after many gradations of health or sickness, others whose cheek is pale and whose frame is wan and feeble from disease, whose life is a pain to them, who have little experience of earthly happiness, who, if they could, would flee away and be at rest. Or, again, you may classify men by their intellectual endowments, according as some men seem to grasp the truth of things by lightning flashes, and others cannot see the light at all despite their efforts, or, if they see it, are only dazzled by its brilliancy. Is there not yet another classification, that of the spirit? Is not the spiritual side of human nature as true as the intellectual or the physical? God made man in His own image; and human nature (be it reverently spoken), like the Divine nature, is a trinity in unity. It is to the spiritual side of man that religion appeals. For the natural man, as St. Paul says—*i.e.*, the psychical man, the man of physical and intellectual culture—receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.

II. I plead, then, for a frank recognition of the spiritual side or aspect of human nature. It is man's necessity to look beyond himself and the world of which he is a part, and to feel, however feebly, after the God who made him. And as the spiritual faculty is supreme in human nature, so is it essentially most delicate. It is hard to preserve in its sensitiveness; it is soon and easily blighted. Do not neglect, then, your own spirituality. You are responsible for it; your character depends on it. It is possible so to live, in such an atmosphere of clear and holy light, that you can as little doubt of God's Being as of your own. But it is possible also so to live that the primary elemental facts of human nature, upon which religion finally depends, shall seem to you as you reflect on them no better than the unsubstantial fabric of a dream. There is a faith which is stronger

than reason, and which abides in the hour when human reason fails.

J. E. C. WELLDON, *The Spiritual Life and Other Sermons*, p. 1.

REFERENCES:—ii. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 407; J. Burton, *Christian Life and Truth*, p. 225; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 152; E. White, *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 360; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 98. ii. 14, 15.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 348.

Chap. ii., ver. 15 (with 1 Tim. iii., ver. 15).—"He that is spiritual judgeth (examineth) all things, yet he himself is judged (examined) of no man."

THE religious or spiritual man, then, is characterised not by taking his judgment from other men, not by living on a decision formed by others, but by a personal private judgment of his own. Religious truth, like other truth, nay, much more than other truth, is a personal conviction, and not merely a conviction, but a judgment, part of the man's own rational being—the very life of his rational being—that in which he looks out upon and judges of men and things, when he is most conscious of exercising his own faculties. Nay, more than this, he holds this truth, not merely on his personal private judgment, but with a certain strenuous insistance upon its independence in the face of other men, even within the Church.

I. What is the antithesis to this tenure in conscious personal and rational judgment of religious truth? It cannot be, what is impossible, that we should hold a body of truth on the external authority of the Church, while it does not commend itself to our own individual judgment. To refuse to exercise our own faculties of judgment, to take things generally, and merely passively on the external authority whether of science or of the Church, is not to be humble, but to be ignorant and to ignore a primary duty.

II. But it is only in our shallowest moments that we shall suppose this repudiation of absolute and unconditional authority which leaves room for an exercise of our judgment, to involve in any sense the repudiation of authority at all, or the denial that truth should be held finally, on mere external authority, to involve the rejection of external authority from its proper place in the formation of our minds. Indeed, those portions of the truth which do not come under the verification of our own faculties must permanently be held on external authority, but the authority itself must then come under verification. It is, for example, only reason to take on the authority of Christ

truths about the future which cannot come under our present cognisance, if we have reason to believe that they come under His. The place of authority, then, is primarily and mainly in helping us to form our judgment. Our judgment ought not to be formed in an isolated individualistic manner. It is out of committing ourselves to authority that right reason normally and naturally grows. Each man is not meant to start afresh. Reverence as well as thought must go to the making of a true judgment. To receive in the Church of Christ in earliest years —in education, at the time of our confirmation—a body of truth, and a system of practice emphasising and embodying holiness of life, to receive it on her loving authority, and to grow up, as our faculty develops, into the intellectual recognition of her truths and practices on our own judgment—this is the normal growth of man.

III. The scheme of Christian truth coheres. To a Christian believer who has advanced to any measure of understanding the whole is one and indissoluble. He recognises that it would be unreasonable to pick and choose; he recognises the coherence of the same sort of means by which we recognise the similar connection, far beyond our personal knowledge, in the department of science. Thus he abides under the shelter of the whole creed. He takes it on trust as a whole. The Christian Church seems to his spiritual faculties eminently trustworthy. He waits while the Spirit leads him into all the truth. That is, he waits while, in the growing experience of life, in the vicissitudes of failure and success, of joy and suffering, of growth and manhood, point by point, the truth becomes realised to his experience and his understanding. We teach children a language greater than childhood's wants will justify, the language of grown men, knowing that they will grow up to want it; and God deals with us thus in His Church in that sphere of our life where experience is slow in coming, where indeed all life is childhood in relation to immortal manhood.

C. GORE, *Oxford Review*, Jan. 28th, 1885.

Chap. ii., ver. 16.—"But we have the mind of Christ."

I. WHAT is the mind of Christ? Is it some high intellectual attainment? Or is it some great moral victory over the affections? The expression is evidently a very full one; for you may take the words of a man and you may take the actions of a man, and still fall short of the mind of that man. For the mind of a man is the spirit of a man. It is the motive which actuates him; it is the feeling which is unconsciously moulding

his conduct every moment; it is the inner life which is continually giving the tone and the character to his outer being.

II. The believer is always striving after the mind of Christ. Nothing less will satisfy him, because nothing less will satisfy God. The soul of Jesus, infinitely stored with the Holy Spirit, becomes a fountain from whence again that Spirit is always pouring out into His own people; so that if ever we receive any grace of the Spirit, we are actually receiving a portion, however small, of the mind of Jesus Christ.

III. See, then, the way by which you are to obtain the mind of Christ. Every way you can, live close to Him, think of Him, meditate upon Him, hold communion with Him, lie at His feet, do constantly acts for His sake, suffer for Him, laud Him, talk of Him, lean upon Him, realise communion with Him, and invariably as you do this you are catching His mind.

IV. Note some of the advantages which belong to those who really have the mind of Christ. (1) No man can really understand the Bible who does not bring to the study of it the mind of Christ. (2) The possession of the mind of Christ is a wonderful clue to bear with us in the intricate windings of the daily labyrinth of life. (3) They have the benefit of the mind of Christ who wish to pray rightly. Those who bring Christ in them to their knees, having the mind of Christian asking, know what is the mind of Christ in giving.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 144.

REFERENCES: ii. 16.—*Homilist*, vol. ii., p. 274. ii. 24.—W. Simpson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 28. ii. 31.—F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 197. iii. 1.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 293. iii. 1-10.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 39. iii. 3.—T. Binney, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 341. iii. 6.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 383; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 409. iii. 6-8.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. iii., p. 208. iii. 6-9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1662. iii. 8.—G. D. MacGregor, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 269. iii. 9.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, p. 339; F. H. Marling, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 255; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 329; *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 132; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 71; J. Stalker, *The New Song*, p. 38. iii. 9-11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 80. iii. 9-17.—R. S. Candlish, *The Gospel of Forgiveness* p. 322. iii. 10-13.—W. Morley Punshon, *Good Words*, vol. ii., p. 355.

Chap. iii., ver. 11.—"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

CONSIDER how Christ is the True Foundation.

I. The nature of Christ. It was Godhead divested of its

circumstance. His great power, the secret of His wonderful, unparalleled career, was not His Godhead, but the immeasurableness of the Holy Spirit which was in Him, which, never being grieved by the slightest approach of sin, wrought in Him infinitely. But He was a man generally subject to the same physical and spiritual laws as any other divinely commissioned and supernaturally furnished messenger of God. And this entire manhood of Christ is one of our foundations.

II. The work of Christ. It was complete. Sealed with the anointings of the Father for this very end, He worked out sacrificially as a Priest what now He gives and applies royally as a King. When that representative Man died, it was the same as if the whole race of mankind, which He was representing, died at that moment, in His death. So the debt is more than paid, the ransom is more than equivalent, the justice of God is more than satisfied. This is the work of Christ, and this again is the element of our Christianity.

III. And, thirdly, the claim of Christ. What return has not such a work a right to ask? As God, He demands His own twice-created work, your body, soul, and spirit—all you have and all you are to be His and only His, to love Him, to serve Him, to glorify Him for ever and ever. If the foundation is once set, our life will have in it that triple power, without which it is not worth living. (1) There will be a mind at rest. (2) The composure of a soul at ease will sustain a confidence which always commands success. (3) From that foundation by secret processes, there will be continually emanating over the whole man a hidden influence, strengthening, uniting, filling him, as for every duty here, so to be able to bear the weight of the glory in heaven.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 83.

REFERENCES: iii. 11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1494; B. J. Snell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 56; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 8th series, p. 116.

Chap. iii., vers. 11-18

LIFE as a Structure.

I. There is a foundation laid. The idea couched in this figure is the radical idea, which runs through the whole of Scripture, that something must be done out of and apart from the man, to enable him even to begin his proper life before God. Jesus Christ is the foundation. We cannot take these words too literally. The foundation of all this world's hopes, in the plan of God and of every man's salvation, is Jesus Christ

Himself, the personal historical Christ, who was born in Bethlehem and lived in Nazareth and died on Calvary. This is the stone which was rejected of the builders, but which God has made the head of the corner. In contending for the literal meaning we do not exclude the doctrinal. All true doctrinal meanings are included. The deity, the humanity, the vicariousness, the righteousness, the love, the sorrow, tears and blood, and death and resurrection and victorious ascent "through all heavens to fill all things." All these things, with many besides, are included in the simple historical yet grand and joyful language, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

II. There is a building to be raised. A foundation without a building is a solecism, a name. One place of the world is just as much a foundation as another, unless you see a rising structure. The structure in this case is to be raised by the man. He *may* build a house; he *ought* to build a temple. The Apostle seems to refer to ordinary houses when he speaks of "wood, hay, stubble." These are the materials used for common houses. Each man's life and soul ought to be a temple of God—nothing less. Surely a noble calling that each of us believing in Christ, is required and expected and will be helped of God in building up his whole existence into a living temple for the habitation of God through the Spirit!

III. There is a time given to finish the work. And when the limit of that time shall come, not one stone more can be laid by the builder, not one touch more given to the edifice in any of its parts before the trial. The Master will never tell us when our work is to end and its recompense is to come. But He tells us this, that we are building day by day. Let us see that we live for Christ, that we grow into His image, and that we work and work in the moral construction of our life which angels will crown and God will bless.

IV. "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." Let us remember that nothing in us, pertaining to the heart or life or character, which is truly Christian, can fall in those flames at last. All Christian principles and all Christian works are indestructible. He whom you serve will gather up all the fragments, so that nothing shall be lost. He is gathering them day by day, and building them compactly together against the day of trial. And when that day shall come, when its fires shall be lighted, when what is inflammable in our lives shall catch and kindle at the first touch of the flame, we shall

rejoice with an awful joy as we behold emerging from those fires that fair structure which will be incorruptible, undefiled, and which will never fade away.

A. RALEIGH, *Quiet Resting Places*, p. 272.

REFERENCES: iii. 12.—*Homilist*, vol. ii., p. 355; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 80. iii. 11-15.—R. Davey, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 262; vol. xxv., p. 84.

Chap. iii., vers. 12-15.

THIS is an awful passage; one whose import no man to whom has been committed the care of souls can realise without trembling. But it has a lesson for all—laity as well as clergy—on whom God has laid responsibility of any kind. St. Paul was much troubled by an account which had reached him of the state of things at Corinth. He had laid the foundation of a flourishing church there, and God had greatly prospered His work; but dissensions had arisen. The Apostle's authority was decried. Rival teachers were set up; rival parties formed. There was already exhibited on a small scale the spirit of disunion and division by which the Church in these latter days has unhappily been distracted. St. Paul remonstrates with them on this state of things. It is an evidence, he tells them, of the imperfection of their Christian attainments.

I. We have here, first, the builders. These are primarily religious teachers, preachers of the Word, ministers. Such only seem to have been before the Apostle's mind. But in a secondary sense the passage has a lesson for private Christians also; forasmuch as every Christian has a building to build for God in his own soul, on the foundation first laid at his baptism. It may be in the souls of others also; and woe worth him, if through his negligence, either building be consumed in the day of trial.

II. Next we have the foundation. This the Apostle describes in one word—Jesus Christ. On the cardinal truth of Christ's crucifixion the hopes of the Church, the hopes of every individual Christian, rest. Let us look to ourselves that we do not lose hold of it.

III. The superstructure which St. Paul supposes to be built on this foundation. This, speaking generally, is the complex result of each man's ministry—of his doctrine and of his labour—its result, as manifested in the lives and conversations of the converts whom he has won, or of the people who have been committed to his charge. The Apostle sets before us two

distinct superstructures, the foundation being the same in both. Some builders he represents as raising a solid and substantial fabric, gold, silver, costly stones. Their doctrine and the result of it were in keeping with the great truth which himself had laid as the foundation; the doctrine uncorrupt—the result, holiness of life and conversation on the part of those who received it, and what he may be thought to have had specially in view—a spirit of charity and brotherly love, as opposed to the spirit of contention and division, which was so unhappily prevalent at Corinth, and which no doubt was in part what he meant by that "wood, hay, stubble," which others were building. I say, in part, not the whole; for, as appears from the Epistle, there were other evils, both doctrinal and practical, of which he had to complain, or rather over which he had to mourn; some of them, indeed, as incongruous with the original foundation as a heathen temple or a Mahometan mosque built upon the site of a Christian Church.

IV. Notice next the day of which the Apostle speaks—the day which will declare, will make manifest, before men and angels, the character of each man's work. In many cases, no doubt, that character is only too apparent on the instant. The unsoundness and worthlessness of the building are open beforehand, going before to judgment. But in others they follow. After a specious show, conformity with the popular taste and the like gain them a wide acceptance, while true and honest work is depreciated and condemned. The day in which the Lord will come will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.

V. What is meant by the fire, of which it is said, "The day shall be revealed, and by which every man's work will be proved"? This some have understood of persecution, and no doubt persecution has many times served as a test, sifting the Church and separating the wheat from the chaff. But it is a test which has only partially been applied. Many workmen have never had their work subjected to it, and even where it has been applied, it has not always proved an infallible test; there have been confessors and martyrs to heresy as well as to the truth. But St. Paul is speaking of a trial to which every man's work shall be subjected, and of a test whose searching scrutiny no unsoundness or dishonesty in the work will escape. The fire of which the Apostle speaks is doubtless that searching scrutiny, repeatedly referred to elsewhere in Scripture, to which at the great and dreadful day of judgment every man's work

will be subjected, when the great white throne shall be set, and the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the books shall be opened, and the dead shall be judged out of those things that are written in the books according to their works; and among these works, the work of each man's ministry, in the case of God's ministers, will hold, we may be sure, the very foremost place.

VI. The Apostle, when he speaks of the unskilful builder being saved, must of course be understood to do so on the presumption that the man himself has personally retained his hold on Christ, and that for Christ's sake the failure of his work—whether owing to ignorance, infirmity, or any less pardonable cause—is mercifully forgiven. Such a one, the Apostle says, shall lose his reward. He will appear before the Lord empty-handed, with no offering to present of souls won from Satan's kingdom or strengthened and confirmed in faith and holiness. He will be happy only in this, that while he takes with shame the lowest place and marvels, while he takes it, that such grace should be extended to him, that place is still within his Father's house.

C. HEURTLEY, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Nov. 4th, 1880.

Chap. iii., vers. 14, 15.

Two Builders on One Foundation.

I. Consider, first, the two builders and their work. The original application of these words is distinctly to Christian teachers. The wood, hay, and stubble are clearly not heresies, for the builder who uses them is on the foundation; and if Paul had been thinking of actual heresies, he would have found sharper words of condemnation with which to stigmatise them than those which merely designate them as flimsy and unsubstantial. But what is meant is the unprofitable teaching which good men may present, when "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed"; while, on the other hand, the gold and silver and precious stones are the solid and permanent and soul-satisfying truths which are revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

II. Think of the twofold effects of the one work. The flame plays round both the buildings. What fire is it? The text answers the question for us—"the day shall declare it." The Apostle does not think that he needs to say what day. They know well enough what day he means. The day is the day when Christ shall come. And the fire is but the symbol that always attends the Divine appearance in the Old and in the

New Testament. That fire reveals, and it tests. What abides the test is glorified thereby; what does not is burned up and annihilated. The builders have been working, if I may say so, as you see builders sometimes nowadays, under special circumstances and in great buildings—working night-work, with some more or less sufficient illumination. The day dawns, and the building at which they have been toiling in the dim light stands out disclosed in all its beauty or deformity. Its true proportions are manifest at last.

III. Look at the twofold effect on the builders. The one gets a reward; the other suffers the loss of all his toil; gets no wages for work that did not last, is dragged through the fire and the smoke, and just saved from being burned up. He stands there, amazed and impoverished, amidst the ruins of his home. These two are like two vessels, one of which comes into harbour with a rich freight and flying colours, and is welcomed with tumult of acclaim; the other strikes on the bar. "Some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship, all come safe to land"; but ship and cargo and profit of the venture are all lost. "He shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved."

A. MACLAREN, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 157.

REFERENCE: iii. 15.—T. Binney, *Tower Church Sermons*, p. 173.

Chap. iii., ver. 16.

CONSIDER the Offices of the Holy Ghost.

I. It is the office of the Holy Ghost to effect such a change that the sinner may be described as born again and made a new man in Christ Jesus. The decayed frame of the soul is rebuilded, its lost powers restored, blind prejudice is removed from the understanding, and the bias of the will turned from the tendency to evil, and thus he who has been brought up a child of wrath with unruly passions and inclinations, and loving nothing but what God disapproves, is transformed into a child of God, with a capacity to apprehend spiritual things, a disposition to entertain them and strength to pursue them. And as it is through the work of the Holy Ghost that man is first created anew to God in righteousness and true holiness, so it is owing to this Divine Agent that he is afterward enabled to pursue steadfastly the Christian course. It were even nothing that Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree, if there were no supernatural agency to apply to ourselves the expiatory virtue of Christ's sacrifice. It is the office of the Spirit to

translate us from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God's dear Son.

II. Having wrought this wondrous change, the Holy Spirit does not leave its subject to himself, for he needs unremitting assistance, and never, while on earth, attains a point at which his own strength suffices for his safety. He must continually pray, and he knows not what to pray for as he ought; he must labour after holiness, and he finds another law in his members warring against the law of his mind; he must count all things but loss that he may win Christ, but the objects of sight have a vast advantage over the objects of faith, and it is intensely difficult to give to what is future the required predominance. But in all these duties and difficulties it is the office of the Spirit to communicate strength sufficient for the occasion, and the Spirit carries on to a gracious consummation the work which He has begun in the man's heart. It rebuilds the fallen and desecrated fabric; it ministers continually at its altars, and makes its walls flash with the hope of immortality.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2067.

Chap. iii., ver. 16.—"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?"

I. EVERY Christian is a dwelling-place of God. This is not a metaphor. It was the outward temple that was the metaphor. The reality is that which you and I, if we are God's children in Jesus Christ, experience. That God should dwell in my heart is possible only from the fact that He dwelt in all His fulness in Christ, through whom I touch Him. That Temple consecrates all heart-shrines; and all worshippers that keep near to Him partake with Him of the Father that dwelt in Him.

II. As temples all Christians are to be manifesters of God. The meaning of the Temple of all temples is that there the indwelling Deity shall reveal Himself, and if it be true that we Christian men and women are, in deep and blessed reality, the abiding-places and habitations of God, then it follows that we shall stand in the world as the great means by which God is manifested and made known, and that in a twofold way—to ourselves and to other people.

III. As temples all Christian lives should be places of sacrifice. The difference between all other and lesser nobilities of life and the supreme beauty of a true Christian life is that the sacrifice of the Christian is properly a sacrifice—that is, an offering to God, done for the sake of the great Love wherewith He hath loved us. As Christ is the one true Temple and we

become so by partaking of Him, so He is the one Sacrifice for sins for ever, and we become sacrificers only through Him.

IV. This great truth of the text enforces the solemn lesson of the necessary sanctity of the Christian life. The first plain idea of the temple is a place set apart and consecrated to God. Christianity is intolerant. There is to be one image in the shrine. One of the old Roman Stoic emperors had a pantheon in his palace, with Jesus Christ upon one pedestal and Plato on the one beside Him; and some of us are trying the same kind of thing—Christ there, and somebody else here. Remember, Christ must be everything or nothing. Stars may be sown by millions, but for the earth there is but one sun. And you and I are to shrine one dear Guest, and one only, in the inmost recesses of our hearts.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, May 6th, 1886.

CHRISTIANS the Temple of God.

I. A temple is a place in which Deity is supposed specially to dwell, and in which He may be approached in worship. It supposes the existence of God and His willingness to hold intercourse with His creatures, and these are truths which have been universally admitted. The true dwelling-place of spirit is spirit; the true temple of Jehovah is the human soul. Christ appears not to abolish sacredness, but to extend it; not to defile holy ground, but to make all the earth holy; not to demolish temples, but to multiply them by making human souls more truly God's habitation than ever had been the sanctuary upon the sacred hill. And thus our Apostle—Jew though he was—drew attention from the outward and visible, saying, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

II. Glance at the past history of this temple. It is in ruins. The lamps have gone out, and the altar is overturned. No incense rises from the censer, no anthem swells from the choir. Majestic, it is still lovely even in decay; but the wind is wailing amid the colonnades, the filth defacing the chiselled relics, the screech owl nestling in the ivy, and the viper hissing among the rank weeds that grow round a few shattered columns that are still erect. Ah! how eloquently these things declare, "Know ye not that man was once the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God did dwell in him? If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy."

III. Consider the reconstruction of the temple This was Christ's great work. He himself was a temple. This world

has been consecrated by Jesus Christ, the High Priest of the universe. Not only so; He makes us individually temples. We were polluted—polluted by sin; but He cleanses the temple from its pollution. We are led under the influence of the Spirit of God to deplore the desolation, to long for the reconstruction of the temple, and when this change in our heart is produced the temple is rebuilt. Christ is the builder of it; He is the chief corner stone. Because sin polluted, God forsook it; but because Christ has purified it, God has returned to it, dwells in it, makes it glorious with His presence; but lest we should again pollute it, and a worse thing happen, the solemn voice comes forth to us from the most holy place, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy."

NEWMAN HALL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3890.

REFERENCES: iii. 16.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 124; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 327; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 38; Hutchings, *The Person and Work of the Holy Ghost*, p. 118.

Chap. iii., vers. 16, 17.

I. WHEN the fall of man broke down the altar within him and scattered the fire, and his vision of God became dim, it did not follow that the Holy Spirit withdrew from the world because the aberration of man's will was allowed to banish Him from the human heart. Whatever belonged to Him as the Giver of Life went on still. "The whole creation," says one father, "is surrounded by the Spirit of God." "The grain of wheat that falls into the ground," says another, "and comes to dissolution, springs up manifold through the Spirit of God that sustaineth all things." And whenever the veering compass of man's will, utterly perturbed by sin, pointed again to the pole of heaven and guided him truly, though but here and there for a season, again was the light seen; the love warmed again, and it was felt that God was still near.

II. We are thus able to infer from the benefits conferred on all Christians by the Holy Ghost what was the blessedness of our original inheritance lost by the fall. He guides into all truth, teaches all things, and brings all things to remembrance, whatsoever Christ has said. Love and joy, peace and longsuffering, all holy and gentle thoughts, does He work in us. So, then, He pervades the intellect and the spirit of man; all that

is distinctive of man as above the other creatures is under His control. Farther even than that does His sway reach; man's higher powers are grafted upon the lower, the motions of his spirit blend with, whilst they rise above, the laws of his physical life. And He that governs the higher elements controls the lower also.

III. It is at the very root of all worship to believe not only that God is near us, but that He has made a temple within us. Every faculty we have is but the reflection of His light in us; our wisdom and our love, that seem so truly ours, are really His, as children believe that windows are in flame when their elders know that it is but the beam of the declining sun reflected back from them. All that is good in us—body or mind—is the present work of the Creator; nothing is ours but sin. What love must not this awaken in me towards Him who is my Father indeed! What an atmosphere of glory and sanctity invests every other soul that is or might be the possessor of the same excellent privilege!

ARCHBISHOP THOMSON, *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, p. 278.

REFERENCE: iii. 16, 17.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 49.

Chap. iii., ver. 17.—"The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

I. THE human soul God's truest temple. This truth expresses one of the great changes introduced by Christianity. The question to be answered, in order to illustrate its meaning, is this: Why has Christianity abolished the one local house, broken down the holy place, and consecrated man himself as the dwelling-place of the Most High? To show why this must be—why only man can be the true temple—we must trace it from two of the great principles of Christianity; for unless we see how this truth arises from the foundation facts of Christianity, we shall not see clearly into its meaning and power. (1) The first principle is—God equally present everywhere. I call that a great Christian fact: though recognised in Judaism and uttered by the prophets, it never broke forth into its wonderful glory until Christ appeared. And as you look at the whole tendency of Christ's teaching and life, you will find that Christianity is emphatically the revelation of the near and all-surrounding God. Christ showed that nature was no dead machine, but the living work of an ever-present Father. (2) God is most clearly manifested in humanity. This is obviously embodied in the incarnation of Christ. There in Christ was the holy of holies. There was the altar which made every other

altar fire grow pale and expire. The Man, the Divine Man, sorrowful and sacrificed, became the temple of Jehovah. Bring, now, these two principles together: God equally present everywhere—the old Temple vanished; God most highly manifested in humanity—the Christian soul the temple of God—therefore temples of God ye are!

II. The manner of realising it. Of course it can be attained only through the indwelling of the Divine Spirit in man. In man there is a trinity of power—thought, emotion, action. In order to become a temple, all these must be consecrated. (1) Intellect to realise God's presence. (2) Emotion—the fire of impassioned devotion. (3) Action. Thought and feeling are both vain without this.

III. The results of the realisation. (1) God manifested to the world. (2) Elevation of life above the sinful, trifling, earthly. Realise the Divine within you, and you will not defile the temple of God. Let immortal hope glorify your work. His is no vain life who has, through the Spirit, become a temple of Jehovah.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 286.

REFERENCES: iii. 17.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 258; E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 246. iii. 18.—H. Hird, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 426; A. D. Davidson, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 415.

Chap. iii., vers. 18, 19.—"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise," etc.

THE Self-wise Inquirer.

Let us inquire what is the vain wisdom of the world, and then we shall the better see how it leads men astray.

I. Now, when it is said that to trust our own notions is a wrong thing and a vain wisdom, of course this is not meant of all our notions whatever; for we must trust our own notions in one shape or other, and some notions which we form are right and true. The notions which we may trust without blame are such as come to us by way of our conscience, for such come from God. Such are the opinions and feelings of which a man is not proud. What are those of which he is likely to be proud? Those which he obtains, not by nature, but by his own industry, ability, and research; those which he possesses, and others not. Every one is in danger of valuing himself for what he does, and hence truths (or fancied truths) which a man has obtained for himself after much thought and labour, such he is apt to make

much of and rely upon, and this is the source of that vain wisdom of which the Apostle speaks in the text.

II. How shall a sinner, who has formed his character upon unbelief, trusting sight and reason rather than conscience and Scripture, how shall he begin to repent? What must he do? Is it possible he can overcome himself, and new make his heart in the end of his days? It *is* possible—not with man, but with God, who gives grace to all who ask for it; but only in one way, in the way of His commandments, by a slow, tedious, toilsome self-discipline; slow, tedious, and toilsome, that is, to one who has been long hardening himself in a dislike of it, and indulging himself in the rapid flights and easy victories of his reason. There is but one way to heaven, the narrow way; and he who sets about to seek God, even in old age, must enter it at the same door as others. He must retrace his way and begin again with the very beginning as if he were a boy. And so proceeding—labouring, watching, and praying—he seems likely after all to make but little progress during the brief remnant of his life.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. i., p. 215.

REFERENCES: iii. 21.—J. Pulsford, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 312. iii. 21, 22.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. i., p. 422.

Chap. iii., vers. 21-3.—"All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come all are yours, and ye are Christ's."

CONSIDER:—

I. How Christ's servants are men's lords. "All things are yours: Paul, Apollos, Cephas." These three teachers were all lights kindled at the central light, and therefore shining. Each was but a part of the mighty whole, a little segment of the circle. In the measure in which men adhere to Christ, and have taken Him for theirs, in that measure they are delivered from all undue dependence on, still more, all slavish submission to, any single individual teacher or aspect of truth. The true democracy of Christianity, which abjures swearing by the words of any teacher, is simply the result of loyal adherence to the teaching of Jesus Christ.

II. Christ's servants are the lords of the world. The phrase is used here, no doubt, as meaning the external material universe. These creatures around us, they belong to us, if we belong to Jesus Christ. That man owns the world who despises it. He owns the world who uses it as the arena, or wrestling-ground, on which, by labour, he may gain strength, and in which he may

do service. Antagonism helps to develop muscle, and the best use of the outward frame of things is that we shall take it as the field upon which we can serve God.

III. Christian men who belong to Jesus Christ are the lords and masters of "life and death." Both of these words are here used, as it seems to me, in their simple physical sense, natural life and natural death. (1) In a fashion we all possess life, seeing that we are all alive. But that mysterious gift of personality, that awful gift of conscious existence, only belongs, in the deepest sense, to the men who belong to Jesus Christ. The true ownership of life depends upon self-control, and self-control depends upon letting Jesus Christ govern us wholly. (2) Even death, in which we seem to be so abjectly passive, and in which so many of us are dragged away reluctantly from everything that we care to possess, may become a matter of consent, and therefore a moral act. If we feel our dependence on Christ, and yield up our wills to Him, then we may be quite sure that death, too, will be our servant, and that our wills will be concerned even in passing out of life.

IV. Christ's servants are the lords of time and eternity, "things present or things to come." All things present, the light and the dark, the gains and the losses, all will be recognised if we have the wisdom that comes from submission to Jesus Christ's will as being ours, and ministering to our highest blessing. And then "all things to come"; the dim vague future shall be for each of us like some sunlit ocean stretching shoreless to the horizon; every little ripple flashing with its own bright sunshine, and all bearing us onwards to the Throne that stands on the sea of glass mingled with fire.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, Dec. 2nd, 1886.

I. "CHRIST is God's." This is the greatest outgoing of infinite love. Unspeakable, inconceivable is the satisfaction of the Father in Christ as the substitute and advocate of men. The Father's delight in the Son incarnate is the uppermost link of the chain whereon all our hope for eternity hangs.

II. "Ye are Christ's"—His property and possession. Think of this in two aspects. (1) How He obtains His property, and (2) how He will use it. He obtains it (*a*) by the sovereign gift of God, (*b*) by the price of His own blood, (*c*) by the renewing of the Holy Spirit. He will use His own (*a*) as objects to exercise kindness on, (*b*) as servants to do His work, (*c*) as living epistles in which the world may read the riches of His grace, (*d*) as company at His coming.

III. "All things are yours." Here is a right royal promise. The shout of a King is in the camp of Christians. All the fulness of the Godhead bodily has been treasured up in Christ, expressly that it may be within the reach of His people. (1) The ministry. Not the greatest of Christ's gifts, in their own intrinsic value, but appearing the largest at the moment, as occupying the foreground of the view, foremost in the list of possessions belonging to the King's children, come Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas, ministers through whom they had believed. (2) "The world." The world is a birthplace for the new creature, and an exercise-ground for invigorating the spiritual life. (3) "Life." Life in the body possesses an unspeakable worth to the man who, being in Christ, lives anew and lives for ever. (4) "Death." When death is near the Christian meets it calmly, if not joyfully, as the dark, narrow door in the partition wall between time and eternity through which the children are led from the place of exile into the mansions of the Father's house. (5) "Things present or things to come." All things are yours, Christians, whether they lie within the horizon of time or beyond it in the unseen eternity. Whatsoever the Father owns becomes the portion of His children.

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits*, p. 119.

THE Christian's Possession.

I. Look first at the main lesson of the text. It is one which the Churches of Christendom have not mastered yet. Must we not plead guilty to something which closely corresponds to the fierce and intolerant partisanship of the Corinthian Church? It is God's will that the unity of every Church should be made up of diversity, but one aspect after another of Divine truth should be periodically accentuated by a master-mind, and commended afresh to the consciences of men. It is by His appointment that now a St. Paul stands forth as the champion of faith and now a St. James as the champion of works. But the disastrous mistake so often repeated is to regard the teachers of these different types as antagonistic instead of being what God intends them to be, supplementary to each other.

II. Look at the items of the boundless wealth of which the Apostle has taken inventory: (1) The world, he says, is yours. There is, then, a sense in which we may gain the whole world and not lose our souls. Nay, St. Paul would say it is only through care of the soul that the world, in any true sense, can be gained at all. But observe, he is here speaking of the whole framework of creation, the whole handiwork of God, and he

declares that this belongs to the Christian. Not only are the invisible forces and its mystic order overruled for us, but all its appliances, all its resources, are ours if we are Christ's. Centre your affections on these things, work for them, live in them apart from Christ, and they truly cease to be yours; they do not belong to you, but you to them. It is only a surrender to Christ that can teach any man the lofty use of this world. (2) "Life is yours." All it means, all it involves, all the stores of joy which it is treasuring daily, all that must grow out of it throughout eternity—all is yours. And why? Because every burden, every difficulty has been borne, every danger faced, the whole pressure of life's strain measured, by One who loved you with an infinite tenderness. (3) Death is yours—death, the last enemy that shall be destroyed, the most merciless and arbitrary of tyrants, whose awful sway it is so vain to dispute. Death is yours, despoiled of his terrors, handed over to you, your slave and not your master; for you belong to Him who has the keys of death and hell, and you share the fruits of His victory over the grave. "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

R. DUCKWORTH, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 145.

REFERENCES: iii. 21-3.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 408; J. Caird, *Sermons*, p. 247; J. Duncan, *Pulpit and Communion Table*, p. 221; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 49. iii. 22.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xv., Nos. 870, 875. iii. 22-4.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 291. iii. 23.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 12. iii. 39.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 189.

Chap. iv., ver. 1.—"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."

I. CONSIDER what is really meant by speaking of human work as a "ministry of God." The conception of a ministry of God underlies our whole system of thought and expression, cropping out again and again in forms, the meaning of which is half forgotten. But seldom, perhaps, we realise that it is, after all, the only conception which makes it worth while to act or to live. The belief that man's action is a ministry of God is the one to which we must come at last, because the only one which explains all the facts and answers all the needs of our complex life.

II. The advent of Christ in great humility is, indeed, the charter of God's infinite love; but it is also the charter of man's

inalienable dignity. Think how the first great mystery of the Incarnation shows us the almost inconceivable truth that in the regeneration of mankind to spiritual life even God's almighty power needed the co-operation of humanity. Think how the revelation of the Son of man at every point showed that the working of the human will with the Divine was of the essence of the actual work of salvation. From the day of Pentecost to the present time is it not through human agency that He is pleased to work? The very call to propagate His gospel implies the truth that we can be—that we must be—ministers of Christ. Mere ministers, I know, bound simply to do His will and leave the issues to Him; but still truly His ministers, each with a real work to do, which by him only is to be done.

III. "Stewards of the mysteries of God." This is a title of dignity, not of humility. We have to make use of, in some sense to sway, mysterious powers of God. "It is required of stewards that a man be found faithful." It is to be faithful in perfect trustfulness, faithful in unswerving obedience, faithful in unselfish devotion, faithful in unsullied truth. God grant that we be found so faithful in the great day.

BISHOP BARRY, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 49.

Chap. iv., ver. 1.—"Stewards of the mysteries of God."

I. WHAT is the meaning of the word "mystery" in the New Testament? It is used to describe not a fancy, not a contradiction, not an impossibility, but always a truth, yet a truth which has been or which is more or less hidden. A mystery is a truth, a fact. The word is never applied to anything else or less; never to a fancy, never to an impossibility, never to a recognised contradiction, never to any shadowy sort of unreality. But it is a partially hidden fact or truth. Truths are of two kinds, both of them truths, and, as such, equally certain; but they differ in that they are differently apprehended by us. There are some truths on which the mind's eye rests directly, just as the bodily eye rests on the sun in a cloudless sky; and there are other truths of the reality of which the mind is assured by seeing something else which satisfies it that they are there, just as the bodily eye sees the strong ray which pours forth in a stream of brilliancy from behind the cloud and reports to the understanding that if only the cloud were to be removed the sun would itself be seen. Now, mysteries in religion, as we commonly use the word, are of this description; we see enough to know that there is more which we do not see, and while in

this state of existence we shall not directly see, we see the ray which implies the sun behind the cloud. And thus to look upon the apparent truth, which certainly implies truth that is not apparent, is to be in the presence of mystery.

II. Science does not exorcise mystery out of nature; it only removes its frontier, in most cases, a step farther back. Those who know most of nature are most impressed, not by the facts which they can explain and reason on, but by the facts which they cannot explain and which they know to lie beyond the range of explanation. And the mysterious creed of Christendom corresponds with nature. After all, we may dislike and resent mystery in our lower and captious, as distinct from better and thoughtful moods; but we know on reflection that it is the inevitable robe of a real revelation of the Infinite Being, and that if the great truths and ordinances of Christianity shade off as they do into regions where we cannot hope to follow them, this is only what was to be expected if Christianity is what it claims to be.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1152

I. WHAT were the distinctive functions of the Christian ministry? To gain a satisfactory answer to this question we must in all honesty consult the New Testament itself as to the primitive idea of the ministry and the terms used to describe its office, and not allow ourselves to be entangled in the technical phraseology which a later theology, not always adhering to the primitive idea, but overlaying it by false analogies, and subsequently by ambitious assumptions of lordship over God's heritage, introduced. Approaching the question, then, in the first instance from the negative side, we may ascertain that the books of the New Testament distinctly abstain from employing for the new ministry of the Christian Church the language which had been used to describe the ministers of religion of the Mosaic system. Christian ministers are never in the New Testament called priests (ἱερεῖς)—that is, if we are to adopt the definition given by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "persons taken from among men, ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that they may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins." The term ἱερεύς, or sacrificial offerer, is repeatedly employed of the heathen priests and of the Jewish priests, but never of Christian officers. Wherever the idea of priesthood in its sense of ἱεράτευμα is recognised as having place in the Christian Church, it is applied to all Christian people and not to the authorised officers

specially. Jesus Christ has made them all kings and priests to God and His Father. All form a spiritual priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ—these spiritual sacrifices are prayers, praises, thanksgivings, or on another side they are "ourselves, our souls and bodies," the rational not material offering, and the whole congregation of Christian people have a full right, as well as a bounden duty, to offer these.

II. The determination of the negative side of the Scriptural doctrine of the ministry enables us to proceed with advantage to the positive side. And there we find ourselves almost embarrassed by the multitude of terms which are used as descriptive of ministerial functions. They who are in a position of authority over their brethren are called messengers, ambassadors, shepherds, teachers, preachers of the word, rulers, overseers, ministers, stewards. Each term represents some varying aspect of the Christian officers, and suggests to them corresponding duties. The central idea of the Christian ministry appears to be the proclamation of the word of the gospel with all its vivifying and manifold applications to the intellects and hearts and consciences of men rather than an administration of an external ceremonial and ritual. It is a high spiritual and moral mission from Christ with which the ordained officers of the Church are charged. To keep alive the belief of one supreme God, the Maker and Upholder and Final Cause of the universe, amidst the sensualism and materialism of a complex civilisation, to evoke the sentiments of love and trust and worship towards Him, to hold up Jesus Christ His only Son as the fullest revelation in human form of the Almighty Father, to unfold the mysteries of His incarnation, the abiding results of His life and ministry and passion and resurrection, to bid men imitate, so far as in their frailty they can, the matchless ideal of goodness and justice and purity and charity exhibited in Him, to proclaim the brotherhood of all men in Him the world's Redeemer, to point men to Him as the Deliverer from sin and the Consoler of suffering, to help their brethren to live the Christian life by example and precept and doctrine,—this is the glorious function of the Christian ministry.

W. INCE, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Jan. 31st, 1878.

REFERENCES: iv. 1.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, 2nd series, vol. i., p 238; G. Moberly, *Plain Sermons at Brighstone*, p. 123; A. Barry, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 49 H. P. Liddon, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvi., p. 385; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii. p. 150. iv. 1, 2.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 80; vol. v., pp. 271, 272; *Plain*

Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. i., p. 303 iv. 1-6.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 54. iv. 2.—C. Garrett, *Loving Counsels*, p. 1.

Chap. iv., ver. 3.

The judgment of our fellow-creatures upon our acts and our characters is, practically speaking, an inevitable accompaniment of human life.

I. Human judgments keep order in the world of thought and in the world of conduct—a certain sort of order, at any rate. (1) They do not, for instance, go far wrong when they are brought face to face with a great public crime which, as being such, is patent, whether to the natural or to Christian conscience. Take, for instance, such crimes as the massacre of St. Bartholomew, or the massacre in Glencoe. At the present day no writer of character, of any persuasion, or in any country, would venture to defend these acts. By the light of the natural conscience of man, by the light of the principles of the gospel of Christ, they are condemned irrevocably. (2) Again, the common judgment of man does not err when it pronounces upon the more personal acts of an individual, supposing them to be well attested. The betrayal of our Lord by Judas is an act upon the character of which all men can pronounce a judgment. An ingenious writer of the last generation tried to show that Judas was not so bad after all. The conscience of man listens for a moment to these ingenious audacities. It listens; perhaps it is indignant; perhaps it smiles; it passes on; it forgets them. (3) Once more, the judgment of man ventures, at times, a step farther—to pronounce with reserves upon character. These judgments are uncertain, tentative, and partial.

II. St. Paul has more reasons than one for treating the conclusions of the Corinthians as a very small thing. (1) The Corinthian judgment about him was like a portrait painter's sketch at a first sitting. They had not yet had time to learn what a longer acquaintance might have taught them. (2) This estimate was a strangely biassed one. What they called a judgment was, in reality, a formulated prejudice. (3) The Corinthians were passing judgment on a point which they had no real means of investigating. (4) St. Paul did not feel or affect indifference to the question whether he was or was not faithful. In matters of the soul he would go straight to the fountain of absolute justice. "He that judgeth me is the Lord." The knowledge that that judgment was going on day by day—the knowledge that it would be proclaimed from heaven here-

after—relieved him of all anxiety whatever as to the opinion which might be pronounced on him at Corinth. "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment."

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 995.

REFERENCE: iv. 3.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 190.

Chap. iv., vers. 3, 4.

THE Christian's Relation to Public Opinion

Note:—

I. That St. Paul was judged unfavourably at this time at the bar of the public opinion of the church of Corinth. The expression "public opinion" describes the common fund of thought which belongs to a larger or smaller number of associated human beings. Every village, every town, every city, has its public opinion—its own characteristic way of dealing with people and things about it. And, as earthly societies, churches have a public opinion of their own, first created by their members, and which, in turn, controls them. And this public church opinion is by no means certain to be always and everywhere just. St. Paul stood face to face with a section of this opinion at Corinth when he wrote: "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment.

II. St. Paul is not at pains to conceal his perfect independence of the hostile opinion of the Corinthians. Not that we can suppose him to have taken any pleasure either in feeling or in proclaiming this independence, for he was a man of quick sympathy, rejoicing if he could be sure of the love of his converts, and not caring to conceal how much they could do to promote or to mar his personal happiness. But, as matters stood, he brushed aside a whole world of inward feeling to say that he was unconcerned as to their judgment upon his apostolical faithfulness. "With me," he said, "it is a small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment."

III. Notice what was the consideration which sustained St. Paul in his conscious opposition to the opinion of the Corinthian Christians. He spoke as from a higher atmosphere, which was already moving him out of the reach of these human voices. He spoke as from the vestibule of a Divine presence-chamber. Just so far as a man is loyal to known truth and known duty, does he assert his manhood; and not in petulance or in scorn, not in indifference or in anger, he is thereby raised

though he be raised upon a cross—raised above the opinion of the world. It is a small thing that he is judged unfavourably by it, because in that higher presence he dares not judge himself at all, and yet he believes his intentions to be accepted by the justice and the charity of his God.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 855.

REFERENCES: iv. 3, 4.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 155; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 272. iv. 4.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 258. iv. 5.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 285; J. W. Reeve, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3271. iv. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 262; vol. xxii., No. 1271; vol. xxiv., No. 1302; T. Gasquoine, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 168; H. P. Liddon, *University Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 18. iv. 7-21.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 62; J. Edmunds, *Sermons in a Village Church*, p. 265. iv. 11.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. i., p. 126. iv. 14.—H. D. Rawnsley, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxii., p. 186. iv. 15.—H. P. Liddon, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 253. iv. 15-17.—L. Abbott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 228. iv. 18.—F. O. Morris, *Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 185.

Chap. iv., ver. 20.—"The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."

THE Spiritual Mind.

How are we the better for being members of the Christian Church?

I. If we would form a just notion how far we are influenced by the power of the gospel, we must evidently put aside everything which we do merely in imitation of others and not from religious principle. The obedience I condemn as untrue may be called obedience on custom. How are we better or worse, if we have but in a passive way admitted into our minds certain religious opinions, and have but accustomed ourselves to the words and actions of the world around us?

II. We may have received the kingdom of God in a higher sense than in word merely, and yet in no real sense in power: in other words, our obedience may be in some sort religious, and yet hardly deserve the title of Christian. To be Christians, surely it is not enough to be that which we are enjoined to be, and must be, even without Christ; not enough to be no better than good heathens; not enough to be, in some slight measure, just, honest, temperate, and religious. I am not wishing to frighten imperfect Christians, but to lead them on, to open their minds to the greatness of the work before them, to dissipate the meagre and carnal views in which the gospel has come to them to warn them that they must never be contented with themselves, or stand still and relax their efforts, but must go on *unto perfection*.

III. What is it, then, that they lack? Observe in what respects the higher obedience is different from that lower degree of religion which we may possess without entering into the mind of the gospel. (1) In its faith which is placed not simply in God, but in God as manifested in Christ. (2) Next, we must adore Christ as our Lord and Master, love Him as our most gracious Redeemer. (3) Further, we must for His sake aim at a noble and unusual strictness of life, perfecting holiness in His fear, destroying our sins, mastering our whole soul, and bringing it into captivity to His law. This is to be a Christian: a gift easily described, and in a few words, but attainable only with fear and much trembling; promised indeed, and in a measure accorded at once to every one who asks for it, but not secured till after many years and never in this life fully realised.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. i., p. 72.

I. WHAT is the distinction between the kingdom in word and the kingdom in power? Those of human kind who do not submit to the Lord and His Anointed branch off into two streams. One division adopts a falsehood, and intrusts it with real power; the other division makes a profession of the truth, but a profession only. In contrast with either form of error, the Church of the living God is distinguished by the union of truth and power. Christians proclaim the right King, and render to Him a real obedience. False appearances abound. A word-kingdom, destitute of power, overspreads the land and deceives the people. To a great extent the kingdom of God has been owned, but the word which owns it is an empty word. Men will not bear the burden of a real kingdom—will not submit to the authority of a real King. Those who allow falsehood to wield the real power of their life are acute enough to perceive that we do not so surrender ourselves to the truth which we profess.

II. What is the kingdom in power? (1) The instrument of the power is revealed truth. The Scriptures, in relation to the kingdom of God, constitute the lade which contains and conveys the water. (2) The essence of the power is Christ. Here is the fountain-head of all the force which, through the preaching of the truth, can be brought to bear upon the hearts and lives of men. The word and ordinances stand ready to convey the power, but the redemption that is in Christ is the power which must be led to men's hearts and let on. If this do not move them, they will never be moved. (3) The application of the

power is effected by the ministry of the Spirit. When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him. Thus Christ's kingdom is maintained until He come again. (4) The effects of this power are great and various. (*a*) It subdues, (*b*) it comforts, (*c*) it levies tribute. Yield yourselves as instruments of righteousness, whereby the operations of the kingdom may be carried on. Ye are not your own; He who bought you claims not only yours, but also you.

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits*, p. 285.

LOOK at the subject:—

I. In relation to individual Christian life. It is one thing to feel the power of God in the soul, and another to be able to vindicate doctrines and to establish a great visible outwork of service. Men cannot always do themselves justice in speech, yet where there are few words there may be true power. On the other hand, men may have great facility in speech, yet their hearts may be but partially under Divine dominion. A man should himself always be greater than his words. However eloquent his speech, his life should be deeper, broader, diviner, than any words can ever reveal. It is possible, too, that from the poorest words there may be poured an irresistible, all-convincing, and all-blessing life, as from the bush in Horeb there flamed a glory not of earth, and from the raiment of the transfigured Nazarene there shone a brightness more splendid than the fire of the sun. A man is not to be judged by the poverty of his words, but by the moral power of his life. The simplicity of his motives, the nobleness of his temper, the purity of his conversation, his forbearance, gentleness, catholicity, self-denial —these are the convincing signs that in his heart are set the pillars of God's throne.

II. In its bearing upon Church organisations or individual methods of Christian service. I suppose that we cannot altogether escape some degree of officialism in our religious life, yet it is to be feared that societyism is not always kept within the limits of our spirituality. We cannot have too much preaching of the right kind. Divine truth is Divine power. Open every pulpit, and let the gospel be declared in many ways, by many means; we cannot have too much exposition of Divine truth or too much enforcement of Divine appeal; but save us from the pious frivolity, the complimentary lying, the courteous hypocrisy, and the ambitious ladder-climbing of a degenerate platform.

III. In relation to religious controversy, taking the term controversy in its widest meaning. In this relation it behoves Christian teachers to remember with special care that "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Let us, working in the name of Jesus Christ, give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and health to the diseased, and let these works be our answer to the challenge of the scoffer, the laughter of the fool. Constantly we must have exposition of great principles, occasionally we must have defence; but the business of our lives is to show forth the mighty and wonderful works of God. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. A living man is the best argument to those who rail against Christianity. Do not let us think it necessary to defend every point in our faith by elaborate preparation in words. Let us go on the Master's business, and in our Master's spirit carry light into the places of darkness, lifting up those that have no helper, giving men to feel that there is a Divine spirit in us; and in doing this we shall answer all controversy and objection by the beneficence of life, and by well-doing we shall put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. PARKER, *City Temple*, 1870, p. 110.

REFERENCES: iv. 20.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 367; *New Outlines on the Testament*, p. 127. v. 1-5.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. iii., p. 355. v. 1-13.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 80. v. 3-6.—F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 49. v. 6.—T. Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 45; W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 371. v. 6, 7.—F. W. Aveling, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 121. v. 6-8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 965; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 336; R. S. Candlish, *The Gospel of Forgiveness*, p. 338. v. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 54; *Three Hundred Outlines*, p. 141; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 8.

Chap. v., vers. 7, 8.—"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened," etc.

OUR Passover.

I. Our Passover Sacrifice. It is very noteworthy, regard being had to the great prominence which the idea of Christ as our Passover has received in later theology, that there are only two passages in the New Testament which express it—the one in this verse of my text, and the other, the much less obvious one, in the Gospel of St. John, who records that our Lord's speedy death obviated the necessity for the fracture of His limbs, seeing in that a "fulfilment of the command as to the Paschal Lamb." But, however unfrequent the references, there can be no doubt as to the allusion or as to the dogmatic teaching

here. Distinctly and clearly in the Apostle's mind here, the one conception of Christ's death which answers to the metaphor is that which sees in Christ's death a death of expiation, though not so distinctly as in other instances a death of substitution. Because He dies the destruction and the punishment does not fall on the man who is housed behind the shelter of His blood.

II. Our Passover Feast. Of course there is no reference here—not even by implication and in any side way—to the Lord's Supper. What St. Paul is thinking about here is the whole Christian life which he compares to that Passover feast. And his exhortation, "Let us keep the feast," is in fact, first of all, this—"Do you Christian men and women see to it that your whole life be a participation in the sacrifice of the slain Lamb." The very life of the Christian is derived from communion with Jesus Christ. We are to feed upon Him if we have life at all. And how, then, are we to feed upon a slain Christ? By faith, by meditation, by continual carrying in grateful hearts, in vivid memories, and in obedient wills, the great Sacrifice on which our hopes build."

III. Our Christian purifying. "Purge out the old leaven." Self-purifying is an absolutely indispensable condition of your keeping the feast. It is quite true that no man can cleanse himself without a Divine helper. It is quite true that we shall not even desire to do it thoroughly, much less be able to do it unless there is, preceding, a faith in Jesus Christ, which is a partaking of the slain Passover Lamb. But it is also true that for any continuous, deep, and growing participation in Him and in His power, there must be this cleansing of our spirits from all filthiness, and a perfecting of holiness in the fear of the Lord. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," is but the same teaching as that of my text—"Purge out the old leaven, that ye may keep the feast."

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, July 9th, 1885.

I. IT is the Person to whom St. Paul, firstly and chiefly, here and always, directs the minds of his disciples. Christ, he tells the Church, is the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe. They obtain the righteousness which the law requires them to obtain, but which it cannot confer, by trusting in a Person, in whom the righteousness dwells livingly and in whom it is livingly manifested.

II. "Christ our *Passover*." In that one word Paul gathers up whatever were the meanings and associations of that festival —all that the different parts of it expressed to the mind of the

Jew—the whole course of the Divine history, from the call of Abraham to the time when the voice said, "This is He in whom I am well pleased."

III. "Christ *our* Passover," says St. Paul,—ours who are the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and ours who are grafted into the same stock with them. He signifies all that ever the Passover signified; but the signification is for the whole human family, not for one portion of it. He was the firstborn among many brethren.

IV. "Christ our Passover *is* sacrificed for us." The complete oblation has been made. Nothing more remains to be done. There is nothing to separate the children from their Father, seeing that He is the perfect Daysman between them.

V. St. Paul, therefore, can say boldly, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for *us*." No one can suppose that by the word *us* he understood the apostles or the Corinthians, or the men of that age exclusively. He did not think that the feast of which they were to eat in full assurance that the redemption had been finished, that they were possessors of all the liberty and grace which it had wrought out, could be charged with any less meaning for those who should be passing through the world's wilderness eighteen hundred years after. The sacrifice of Christ is God's sacrifice, not our own. We may come to the feast confessing the malice and wickedness which has been in us. God will not send us empty away. He who of His tender love to mankind gave up His Son for us all, will He not with Him freely give us the purity and love which we have not and never shall have ourselves?

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 283.

REFERENCES: v. 7, 8.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 143; G. Huntington, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, 2nd series, p. 199; A. Barry, *Three Hundred Outlines*, p. 142; J. Keble, *Sermons from Easter to Ascension Day*, p. 1; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. vii., p. 101. v. 8.—J. R. Macduff, *Communion Memories*, p. 98. v. 10.—T. B. Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 19. v. 12, 13.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 18. vi. 1-7.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 142.

Chap. vi., vers. 2, 3.—"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?"

I. THE Apostle seems to refer to something in the Christian doctrine which was well known then, but certainly it is very obscure now. We always look forward to being judged, not

to judging others, and therefore the appeal of the Apostle has no force for us. If the words stood alone, indeed, we should probably be inclined to think that they only spoke of judging in the sense of condemning by contrast or example, as our Lord said that the men of Nineveh would rise in judgment with that generation and condemn it. But this reference to future judgment does not stand alone; there are several passages having the same reference (Dan. vii. 22; Matt. xix. 28; Rev. xx. 4). That all these references are obscure is plain enough, but it is also plain that they mean something, and that the exercise of judicial authority on the part of the saints shall be real, however difficult for us to comprehend.

II. The saints shall judge the world, and yet they must themselves be judged, and it is plain that one judgment will decide the fate of all. There can be no favouritism with Him before whom we must all stand. These things can only be reconciled by the supposition that the saints will be called to the first (and strictest) account, and that, having been approved and found worthy, they will then become assessors of their Judge in passing judgment on the rest, and sit beside Him, hearing and approving His sentence.

III. When it says that the saints shall judge the world, I think that reason and analogy of Scripture teach us to limit "the world" to the heathen world. I cannot think that judging their fellow-Christians can ever be the lot of any, however perfect. The judgment of angels we must certainly limit to bad angels, for it does not appear how the others which never swerved from their allegiance would be liable to any judgment at all; none can be judged unless there be some accusation against them. Surely the solemn thought that we shall be called upon to assist in passing sentence upon immortal beings may serve, as the Apostle intended it, to show the pettiness, the unworthiness, of much of our daily life and strife! We are quarrelsome over trifles, exasperated over slights, driven to extremities over imaginary wrongs. God forgive us Christians! We had forgotten that *we* were to judge the world, and angels too, in a little while.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 299.

REFERENCES: vi. 7.—G. Calthrop, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 165. vi. 9.—W. M. Arthur, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 253. vi. 11.—E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, p. 177. vi. 12.—A. Mursell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 264. vi 15-20.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 147. vi. 17.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 961. vi. 18.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, p. 119. vi. 18-20.—E Garbett,

Experiences of the Inner Life, p. 179. vi. 19.—J. Pulsford, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 312; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 253.

Chap. vi., vers. 19, 20.—"**Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost,**" etc. NOTE :—

I. God's consecration of the body. The image of the text is that of a shrine in which a god dwells. The body of a Christian believer holds another tenant than his human spirit; a Divine presence is within him, at once his glory and his power. And that Divine presence confers an unutterable sacredness upon his body. The body is a medium of Divine service. That is one of the suggestions of God's consecration of it. The impulses of the indwelling Spirit ask for its co-operation; they need its ministry if they are to pass from gracious thoughts into Christian acts. We can set no limits to God's consecration of the body of the Christian believer, can form but little conception of the complete and noble service which is possible to us because He has made such a shrine in which to dwell. These things speak of the "temple of the body," and lend an awful, glorious meaning to the admonition which bids us glorify God in our body as well as in our spirit, since the body, equally with the spirit, is His.

II. Our consecration of our bodies. The first essential to our glorifying God in our body is that we regard it with reverence. That is the use Paul is here making of the fact that it, equally with the spirit, is redeemed; that it, equally with the spirit, is a sphere of Divine service. Irreverence for the body, disregard of all its noble capabilities, and the ends to which it may be made to minister, was closely connected with the sin of impurity, which the Apostle is rebuking. We may make another application of our text. It is a Christian duty to do all in our power for the relief of bodily suffering, both in ourselves and others. Next to the work of preaching the gospel and healing the spiritual woes of men, which are the root of all their bodily sufferings—a work which remains in its importance first and unapproachable—comes the work of fighting against and destroying the pains that afflict humanity. A wonderful framework is the human body, writing out the story of sin in sickness; lending itself to all the process of human discipline; aiding the endeavour after spiritual perfection; making the noblest human ministries and a high Divine service possible to us.

A. MACKENNAL, *The Life of Christian Consecration*, p. 100.
(See also *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 276.)

REFERENCES: vi. 19-20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 1004; vol. xxvi., No. 1554; *Sermons for Boys and Girls*, p. 340; *Three*

Hundred Outlines, p. 143; W. Hubbard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 102; *Homilist*, vol. iii., p. 370. vi. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1163; W. Lamson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 239; *Ibid.*, vol. xi., p. 31. vii. 3.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ix., p. 388.

Chap. vii., ver. 7.—"Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that."

THE Severe and Social Virtues (for St. Philip and St. James's Day).

I. St. James, surnamed the Just, was remarkable for the severities of a mortified life, and a meek and austere sanctity, so that the violent death to which he was put by the Jews was looked upon even by their own countrymen as bringing down the Divine judgment on their nation. His Epistle is best understood when we bear this in mind. Hence its memorable precepts of the blessedness of patience, of wisdom sought from above, of faith and prayer; hence its sententious short proverbs of heavenly-minded wisdom, and the sayings of a man of God, interspersed with that sweetness which is ever found with self-sacrificing devotion. St. Philip, on the other hand, seems rather an example of social and brotherly charities, easy of access to all, seeking and sought for in Christian friendship; as when he goes to Nathanael, with St. Andrew, and when the Greeks, who would see Jesus at the last Passover, come to him. Great as is the blessing of such a temper both to itself and to others, yet its deficiency is apt to be in this, that it less realises those spiritual mysteries of God which are disclosed to the heart in secrecy and solitude of spirit. Hence that complaint in our Lord's words in the Gospel for to-day, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?"

II. Nevertheless it must be observed, that Christian grace so harmonises and fills the character, that such personal diversities are not to be pressed too far. St. James the Less was greatly beloved of all Christians for his singular meekness; and no doubt St. Philip, in the practices of mortification, came to understand the secrets of Divine wisdom; yet, nevertheless, under the same spirit some such diversities and differences of character do remain; and in the words of the text, "Every one hath his proper gift of God; one after this manner, and another after that."

I. WILLIAMS. *The Epistles and Gospels*, vol. ii., p. 373.

REFERENCES: vii. 10.—R. S. Candlish, *Scripture Characters and Miscellanies*, p. 156. vii. 10-24.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on*

Corinthians, p. 103. vii. 14.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. x., p. 321 vii. 16.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 173. vii. 17.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 53. vii. 18-24.—F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 156.

Chap. vii., ver. 19 (with Gal. v., ver. 6; vi., ver. 15).—"Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God."

FORMS *versus* Character.

Note:—

I. The emphatic proclamation of the nullity of outward rites.

II. Look at the threefold variety of the designation of the essentials. (1) The keeping of the commandments of God is everything (1 Cor. vii. 19). (2) "A new creature" (Gal. vi. 15). The one thing needful is keeping the commandments of God, and the only way by which we can keep the commandments of God, is that we should be formed again into the likeness of Him, of whom alone it is true that He always did the things that pleased God. (3) "Faith which worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6). If we are to be made over again, we must have faith in Jesus Christ. We have got to the root now, so far as we are concerned. We must keep the commandments of God; if we are to keep the commandments we must be made over again, and if our hearts ask how can we receive that new creating power into our lives, the answer is, by "faith which worketh by love."

A. MACLAREN, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 229.

REFERENCES: vii. 19-24.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 210. vii. 22.—Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 366.

Chap. vii., ver. 23.—"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."

I. ST. PAUL'S words, "Be not ye the slaves of men," have an important bearing upon the exercise of the understanding. "Bought with a price" by one who claims, not one part, but the whole of you, not more the conduct than the will, not more the energies than the affections, not more the soul than the reason, it cannot be safe, it cannot be right, it cannot be honest to resign into another's keeping the exercise of the intellect upon matters of evidence or matters of doctrine; to make one man's view, or one man's thought, or one man's faith, serve for ten or twenty or a hundred others; to attach yourself to a school, or a party, or a system, in such sense that you yourself shall be absolved from the task of proving all things

as a necessary preliminary to the other duty of holding fast that which not others but you yourself have found to be good.

II. That which is true of the understanding is true also of the conscience. There is a sanctuary within each one of us into which no minister and no brother can enter without presumption and without profanation. It is the conscience of the man in the sight of God—it is that spirit of the man which no one knoweth but the man—it is the secret shrine of motive and will, of memory and responsibility, and of the life's life. It may be instructed, it may be informed, it may be influenced, it may be moved; but in every aspect save one it is free—no dictation and no direction can intrude within its precincts, for One is its Master, even Christ, and all else, even the ministers of Jesus Christ, are here not lords, but brethren. To establish over the individual conscience a right of inspection, or a right of discipline—to lay down rules for its habitual or periodical self-disclosure—to say without this there is no safeguard for the life, and no security for the death,—this is to deny or to obscure the great characteristic of the gospel; this is to speak a word against the all-sufficiency of the Holy Ghost as the Light and the Guide, the Remembrancer and the Comforter, of Christ's people.

III. At common times, under usual circumstances, the Church's directory is the pulpit, and the Church's confessional the congregation. There, where the bow is drawn of necessity at a venture, the arrow flies to its mark the more felt because unseen. There, where the prayer of the preacher and the prayer of the hearer have jointly invoked the guidance which is omniscient wisdom, the voice behind will be heard saying again and again in each emergency of the spiritual being, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Independence of all save God is the prerogative of the conscience. Not in pride, but in deep self-knowledge of the difficulty of telling into any human ear the very thing itself—that is, knowledge of the perils of spiritual intimacy, alike on the one side and on the other—knowledge of the facility with which an indolent will may pass from seeking help to trusting in man—knowledge, finally, of the infinite strength which comes into us by being quite absolutely alone with God in our confidences and in our struggles—we shall feel, the weakest of us with the strongest, that on the whole, and with a view to the eternal future, we are best as we are, without confessor and without director save the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, one God blessed for ever—we shall come

back to the text, and think that it has a voice for us in this thing, "Ye were bought, each and all, with a price; be not ye servants of men."

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Oct. 18th, 1877

I. LOOK first at the assertion, "Ye are bought with a price." This is one of the ways in which, in Scripture, the great effect of Christ's death in the room of sinners is described. In the words of the text the Apostle seems to say, "Ye are not your own," you belong, by right of His purchase, to Christ: your intellects are His to be instructed by Him; your consciences are His to be regulated by Him; your lives are His to be ruled by Him; absolutely and entirely you are His. Now at first sight that looks like a consignment of us to the most abject slavery; for no human oppression can thoroughly enchain the spirit. But here it must be remembered that what on the Lord's side is a purchase, is on the believer's side a voluntary consecration, and that the Master is not a man, but the God-man, with whom oppression is impossible. Thus it comes about, that the Divine ownership of us by Jesus is the charter of our deliverance from our fellow-men, and the paradox that the service of Christ is perfect freedom is made good.

II. Paul does not mean to say here that all manner of service of men is inconsistent with our ownership by Christ; we have only to read his exhortations to servants in his various Epistles to be convinced of that. What he desires to allege is that Christ's property in us emancipates us from abject slavery to men in every form which is inconsistent with that property. No man can deprive us of that which already belongs to Christ; and it is through the assertion of that principle by Christians that all the victories of religious freedom have been won in the world. The most absolute devotion to Christ is the most complete declaration of individual independence, even as the defiant rejection of Christ on this score of liberty issues in the most degrading form of slavery. These things may seem to be contradictory, but they are true, and they have often been demonstrated to be so in the history alike of individuals and of the race. Therefore choose to be ransomed by Christ that you may be delivered from servitude to men.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Contrary Winds*, p. 65.

REFERENCES: vii. 23.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1163; W. E. Collen, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 20; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 118; H. Stowell Brown, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 208.

Chap vii., ver. 24.—"Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

THE Christian Life.

I. We are led from the words before us to the thought that our chief effort in life ought to be for union with God. "Abide with God," which, being put into other words, means, I think, mainly two things—constant communion, the occupation of all our nature with Him, and consequently the recognition of His will in all circumstances. Let us believe that every single soul has a place in the heart, and is taken into account in the purposes of Him who moves the tempest and makes His sun to shine on the unthankful and on the good. Let us try to anchor and rest our own souls fast and firm in God all the day long, that, grasping His hand, we may look out upon all the confused dance of fleeting circumstances and say, "Thy will is done in earth," if not yet "as it is done in heaven," still done in the issues and events of all things, and done with my cheerful obedience and thankful acceptance of its commands and allotments in my own life.

II. The second idea which comes out of these words is this: Such union with God will lead to contented continuance in our place, whatever it be. Calmness and central peace are ours, a true appreciation of all outward good and a charm against the bitterest sting of outward evils are ours, a patient continuance in the place where He has set us is ours, when by fellowship with Him we have learned to look upon our work as primarily doing His will, and upon all our possessions and conditions primarily as means for making us like Himself.

III. Such contented continuance in our place is the dictate of the truest wisdom. (1) After all, though you may change about as much as you like, there is a pretty substantial equipoise and identity in the amount of pain and pleasure in all external conditions. What is the use of such eager desires to change our condition, when every condition has disadvantages attending its advantages, as certainly as a shadow? (2) While the portion of external pain and pleasure summed up comes pretty much to the same in everybody's life, any condition may yield the fruit of devout fellowship with God. (3) Our text is a revolutionary one. But surely Christ is more than mammon, and a spirit nourished by calm desires and holy thoughts into growing virtues and increasing Christ-likeness is better than circumstances ordered to our will, in the whirl of which we have lost our God!

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons in Manchester*, 3rd series, p. 1.

REFERENCES: vii. 24.—M. Nicholson, *Redeeming the Time*, p. 91; A. K. H. B., *Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*, 3rd series, p. 293.

Chap. vii., ver. 29.—"The time is short," etc.

I. ST. PAUL tells us that the time is short. In one sense—not an unimportant one—time is very long. The great God who is working out His plan in the universe has no stint of time. What we see is but a point in an infinite line, of which we can see neither beginning nor end. It is thoughts like these which free us from besetting impatience, that strengthen faith. We may be in a hurry and restless, but God is in no hurry; the evolution of His purpose is certain, though to us it may seem slow. It is like the movement of the shadow on the sundial. But it is quite possible to dwell too much on this aspect of Him, and to let it paralyse our action and make us fatalists. And it is therefore the more necessary to think of St. Paul's view—that time is short; to learn how to be earnest without being impatient, to know that our time is short, and that we have much to do, and yet to be willing when we have done our best to leave the result in God's hands.

II. The time is very short for the work we have to do. There is: (1) the work of self-discipline, the discipline of the mind; (2) the opening of the mind in new directions; (3) the discipline of the flesh; (4) work for others and for God. God shows us His work to do in the world and bids us help, but our help must be genuinely our own; if we will not do our work, then it remains undone—undone for ever. Here lies the infinite pathos of wasted time; it is irrecoverably gone. If we do not do what we have to do, not we ourselves, nor any one else, not God Himself, can do the work. It is left undone. Do you remember a passage of George Eliot which ends "God cannot do Antonio Stradivari's work without Antonio"? Some two or three centuries ago, in a town in North Italy, lived Antonio Stradivari, a maker of violins. They are now world-famous and almost priceless. Some one once sneeringly told him that if God wanted violins He could certainly make them for Himself, and Antonio said, No, that this was Antonio Stradivari's work; not even God could do it without Antonio. This saying is daring, but true—true for him, and true for you and me. You and I have our work to do, our work for God and for one another, and God cannot do our work for us. We must do it ourselves, and our time is short.

J. M. WILSON, *Sermons in Clifton College Chapel*, p. 79.

SUPPOSE a man with more or less struggle, with what grace he can, has accepted the shortness of life as a conviction. What effect will that conviction have upon his life? What effect

ought it to have? Evidently it ought to go deeper than his spirits. It ought to do something more than make him glad or sorry.

I. First of all, must it not make a man try to sift the things that offer themselves to him, and then to find out what his things are? The indiscriminateness of most men's lives impresses us more and more. Many men's souls are like omnibuses, stopping to take up every interest or taste that holds up its finger and beckons them from the side walk. Conscientiousness, self-knowledge, independence, and the toleration of other men's freedom which always goes with the most serious and deep assertion of our own freedom, are closely connected with the sense that life is short.

II. The sense of the shortness of life brings a power of freedom in dealing with the things which we do take to be our own. He who knows he is in the world for a very little while, who knows it and feels it, is not like a man who is to live here for ever. He strikes for the centre of living. He cares for the principles and not for the forms of life. He is like a climber on a rocky pathway, who sets his foot upon each projecting point of stone, but who treads on each, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the one above it.

III. In the shortness of life the great emotions and experiences by which the human character is ruled and shaped assume their largest power and act with their most ennobling influence.

IV. All men who have believed that there was another life have held in some way that this life was critical, and man is made so that some sense of criticalness is necessary to the most vigorous and best life always.

V. When your time of intercourse is short with any man, your relations with that man grow true and deep. Cannot the men and women whom we live with now be sacred to us by the knowledge of what wonderful mysterious ground it is that we are walking on together, here in this narrow human life, close on the borders of eternity?

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *Sermons*, p. 313.

REFERENCES: vii. 29.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 338; J. S. Howson, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3961.

Chap. vii., vers. 29-31.

I. LET us contrast the world's treatment of sorrow with that of Christ. Here we use the word world in the widest sense—the

world of which the Apostle John speaks—as including all that is not under the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which has no law but its own interest, or passion or caprice, no aims beyond those which begin and end in the present life, no understanding or care for things which are unseen but eternal. What has it to say to the crushed spirit in its hours of desolation? The contact with deep sorrow awakens real sympathy even in men of the world. From heaven surely come the instincts which teach us to take thought for those who are ever represented as being specially the objects of the Divine compassion—the widow and the fatherless, the orphaned and the lonely. The world, at least as we know it in Christian lands, extends to them its pity, is willing to minister to their material needs, recognises an obligation on society to care for these its helpless members. But beyond this the world does not and cannot go. It has no medicine which it can minister to a heart diseased. Troubles must come, but they are so painful, they interfere so sadly with the ordinary course of life, interrupting its duties and engagements, throwing their dark shadow over scenes of gladness and rejoicing, disturbing the current of thought by introducing into it elements which it is desirable to exclude, that the less men dwell upon them, and the sooner they can dismiss them, the better. The world would fain have the mourner weep as those who wept not, for the less they see and hear of his tears the better; but they say nothing as to how this self-conquest is to be effected. The strain which the world adopts is repeated, though in an entirely different strain and with quite other accompaniments by the gospel. It blesses the mourners, but it does not mean them to go on mourning for ever, and give up struggle and work, in order that they may have leisure to mourn, but it comforts them. It says, "Weep, as though ye wept not"—that is, it inculcates sobriety even in our sorrow, forbids the extravagant lamentation which would suggest that we had lost everything, inculcates not only self-restraint, but the exercise of the simple trust and heavenly wisdom by which our sorrow may be turned into joy. But in giving the exhortation it sets in action the influences which may help the soul to obey it.

II. Note the considerations which may enable sorrowing hearts to accept this view of the gospel, and to obey this exhortation. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," is a maxim which men might well accept, if there be not the hope which Christianity awakens in the heart. The eternal life and

the hope which glows with its brightness, the everliving and unchanging Christ, the infallible words of His love—these are the portion in the possession of which the heart finds a consolation, and even a fulness of joy with which nothing can interfere. Every other fountain of comfort may be dried up, but this is ever fresh and abundant in its flow. Every other friend may fail, but here is One who remains the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. All other joys may fade and die, but here are pleasures in which is the bloom and beauty of eternal youth.

J. GUINNESS ROGERS, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 65.

THE Waiting of the Visible Church.

Most men are just what they are in this life, and never rise above it or look out beyond it. No purpose of their heart is controlled and checked by the thought of the day of Christ. Who dares to tell us when that day shall *not* be? Uncertainty is the very condition of waiting and the spur of expectation. All we know is that Christ has not told us when He will come; but He has said, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Let us then draw some rules by which to bring this truth to bear on our own conduct.

I. First, let us learn not to go out of our lot and character in life, but to live above it. What and where we are is God's appointment. We have a work to do for Him, and it is just that work which lies before us in our daily life. To affect contempt for all natural states and actions of life, with the plea that we live for God, is mere affectation and contempt of God's own ordinance; to live without habitual thought of God and of the day of Christ's appearing, with the plea that we are controlled by the outward accidents of life, is mere self-deceit and abandonment of God Himself.

II. To check these two extremes, let us strive to live as we would desire to be found by Him at His coming. Who is there that would not dread to be found in that day with a buried talent and an unlit lamp, with a sleepy conscience and a double mind, with a shallow repentance or a half converted heart? By the discipline of self is the Christian man so prepared that the day of Christ can neither come too late nor too soon for him.

III. Surely, then, we have need to lose no time, for "the time is short." To a man that looks for Christ's coming, how

utterly worthless are all things that can perish! how awful is that which is alone imperishable! Therefore let us make sure our standing in God's sight, and all things shall fall into their place; all parts of a Christian's life are in harmony—time with eternity, his own soul with God.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 349.

ONLY a Little While.

Nowhere does St. Paul or any other inspired writer use the fact of the shortness of life to encourage a sense of indifference to life's duties. The teaching of Christ and of His apostles is clear and sharp, that life, however short, is a time of work, of duty, of ministry. If the world is not to be abused, it is none the less to be used. Short as the time is, it is long enough for much weeping and rejoicing; and because it is short, we are not to cultivate indifference to the joy and sorrow of our brethren, but rather to rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep. Note the details of the Apostle's application of the text.

I. If our earthly homes crowd out the attractions of our heavenly home, if we use them to foster our worldliness, our pride and vanity and self-indulgence, we are misusing them, and we need the Apostle's caution. His injunction is met when the home is treated as a means to holy and useful living here, and as a preparation for a better home hereafter.

II. Note the bearing of this fact on the joy and sorrow of this world—"the time is short." There are people who have gone on brooding over the misery and inequality and cruelty of this life until they are literally filled with cursing. The world will not take them at their own value, therefore they hate the world. This is really the essence of this part of our text, They that weep; they that feel keenly the world's cruelty and sorrow—as if they wept not—not acting as though all of life consisted in the world's being just and kindly to them, as if to live were only not to weep, but on the contrary feeling that it is far more important to be right than to be thought right; far more important to be sweet and loving and tolerant, and cheerfully busy about God's work, than that the world should give them their due. And so of our joys. Not that we are to pass this life in gloom and sullenness because it is short and another life is coming. But if there is grander, richer, more enduring joy in the life beyond this, it is not the part of wisdom to be too much absorbed in earthly joy. Does it not become us to hold

this world lightly in view of these two truths—so little time left and eternity approaching?

M. R. VINCENT, *God and Bread*, p. 363.

REFERENCES: vii. 29-31.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 481; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 42; F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 169; *Ibid.*, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 114. vii. 29-32.—C. Short, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 344.

Chap. vii., ver. 31.—"And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away."

NOTE:—

I. The reason why we should not abuse this world: "For the fashion of this world passeth away." Literally, the scene changes. The surface of the world is always shifting. The moral instability of the earth, in the history of its inhabitants, is like the physical instability of the water. That man is in a pitiable plight whose soul cleaves to the fashion of this world; for it is continually moving, and every movement rends him. The redeemed of the Lord, even in the present world, obtain a firmer footing and enjoy a brighter hope. If your heart be in heaven, and the weight of your hope habitually leaning there, the world cannot hurt you although it should slip from beneath your feet.

II. The abuse of this world which the text forbids. The "world" which should be used and not abused is this earth with all that the Creator has spread around it or stored within it for the benefit of man. When the gifts are turned aside from their wise and kind intent the Giver takes it ill. To consume more than we need or use, whether it be done by rich or poor, is to abuse the world which God has kindly framed and fitted for the use of men. In actual experience the abuse of the world runs down into the minutest transactions of individual life.

III. The use of this world which the text permits and enjoins. Christians both *may* and *must* use the world. (1) They *may* use it. Practical religion does not consist in denying ourselves the use of temporal good, or in tasting it with terror. Every creature of God is good, and should be received, not rejected. When we become new creatures in Christ we are not thereby debarred from the fulness of the earth and sea; then we possess them by a better title, and therefore enjoy them more. (2) They *must* use it. Do not permit the riches, for example, to lie so long still that they shall rust. The rust will hurt your flesh at the time, and witness against you in the

judgment. Whatever God has given you of personal qualification, or social position, or material means, take the use of it yourself, and let your neighbour participate in the benefit.

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits*, p. 102.

THE Use and Abuse of the World.

I. The use of the world. There is something very significant in the phrase "they that use the world." On the lips of the Apostle Paul it implies that the world may be religiously employed; that we may properly avail ourselves of its advantages, and lay it under tribute for worthy ends. (1) The first thought suggested by the phrase "using the world" is this: we ourselves are more and greater than the world, as the workman is more and greater than his tools. Here is one principle to guide you in the use of the world—Be its master, not its slave; use it, be not used by it. (2) The true value of the world lies in the ends we make it serve. What should we think of a workman who used his tools simply for the sake of using them, or who turned out articles not worth the cost of the materials and the labour? He is a waster and not a user of the world who simply lives in it, leaving no achievements behind him. The world is for more than self-discipline. He only uses the world aright who accomplishes in it and by it something worth achieving. (3) The world is God's. The Father who has placed us here for our own education, and for the exercise of a blessed human fellowship, comes in again and again to see what progress we are making; and the ability to recognise His presence and rejoice in it is a certain test as to the use we are making of His world.

II. The peril of abusing the world. The world has this danger just because of all that is valuable in it; its power to stir the deepest passion, to awaken high impulses, to lay its hand on large purposes, and attract strong and eager thought. A worthless world would only have dangers to the base; we are most in peril when worthy possibilites are within our reach. Since the master-passion of life is sure to become its solitary passion, see that yours is the passion for God. So will you use the world as not abusing it. And all things will be yours; in the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all will be yours, since ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

A. MACKENNAL, *The Life of Christian Consecration*, p. 115.

REFERENCES: vii. 31.—T. Binney, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 129; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 94; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 438; T. De Witt Talmage,

Old Wells dug Out, p. 169; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 341; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 9th series, p. 199; S. Martin, *Sermons*, p. 98; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 209.

Chap. vii., ver. 32.—"But I would have you without carefulness."

I. If you look at the context of this passage, you will perceive that St. Paul's words refer to a particular case, or take their rise from circumstances peculiar to the times. The times were those of persecution, when men who avouched the Christian faith exposed themselves to the loss of substance and of life. It was undesirable, in times such as these, that men should add to the causes of disquietude and anxiety; and therefore the Apostle advised their not contracting marriages, inasmuch as single men were less encumbered, and more at liberty to devote themselves without let or hindrance to the service of God. It is obvious that what the Apostle designates by carefulness is not prudent attention, but anxious care.

II. It is not so much the actual trial of to-day as the anticipated trial of to-morrow which generates that carefulness from which Christians should be free. Consider the expression "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," for it helps to show you, according to the whole drift of our discourse, where there ought to be carefulness and where there ought not. There is in some Christians a fear that exemption from trial proves deficiency in godliness. Such careful Christians should be told that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." If they suffer not much evil, they may be sure, on the testimony of Christ, that they have enough. It is future good, and not future evil, on which we should have our hearts fixed—heaven with its magnificent abundance of good. Let the image of this crowd your to-morrow, and to-morrow cannot occupy too much of to-day.

H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2201.

References: vii. 32.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1692. vii.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 237. viii. 1.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 89; W. C. Magee, *Three Hundred Outlines*, p. 144; J. R. Gardner, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 393.

Chap. viii., ver. 2.—"If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

I. Corinth was a large city with a great deal of communication with other countries, and an active state of knowledge existing within itself. The Corinthians were likely to be struck with the beauty of the gospel morality, to admire its large and liberal

views, embracing as it did all nations and ranks of men without distinction, and laying no stress upon outward ceremonies, such as they had seen the Jews so fondly attached to. But their habits and characters would lead them to take this view of Christianity alone, and to run wild upon it; whereas its other features—its humility, its intense charity, and its self-denial—they were very little inclined to value.

II. Again, while entering readily into what they heard of the liberty and glorious prospects of the Christian, they wanted the humility and soberness which should save them from running into the evils of fanaticism. The gifts of the Spirit, which they had received, were to be displayed without the cold restraints of order or usefulness; women having become heirs of the promises no less than men, why should they still retain in their public assemblies that old fashion of dress which directed them not to appear abroad unveiled, as if they were intruding beyond their own proper element? Again, the Lord's Supper was a Christian festival, a commemoration of their high privileges; let it then be celebrated with nothing but joy. The earth was the Lord's, and He had given the use of it to His redeemed children; they need not then fear to enjoy His gifts. To a people of this sort there was more need of that which might humble them than of anything to encourage them more. They needed not to be told of the excellence of knowledge, but to be warned of its insufficiency when not accompanied by humility or charity; to be reminded, when they talked of their knowledge, that knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. Many instances might be given, in both the Epistles to the Corinthians, setting forth their peculiar character and the peculiar addresses which it required from the Apostle. We may see their disposition, and the way in which that disposition is treated; and if we feel that ours is such a one, then this is a part of Scripture which suits us particularly; we should read it over and over again, for here is the wisdom of God for the curing of our own special infirmities.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 204.

REFERENCES: viii. 6.—A Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 293; Bishop Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 45. viii. 8.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 98. viii. 8-13.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 133. viii. 29.—J. Keble, *Sermons from Easter to Ascension Day*, p. 281. ix. 15.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. vi., p. 236.

Chap. x., ver. 16.—"Necessity is laid upon me."

It is a ministry of necessity that Christ calls for, that the world needs, that a revived Church supplies to-day. We need not ministers that may or that will, but ministers that must preach the gospel. We need members not that may or that will, but that must live the gospel.

I. The work. They preach the gospel. (1) Without opening his lips to preach, or putting his hand to missionary work, every one who bears Christ's name either helps or hinders the gospel by his spirit and his life. Thousands of opportunities are thrown away through thoughtlessness and a self-pleasing, worldly habit of mind. (2) Another department of ministry is word and work directly contributed to the kingdom of Christ. The methods and opportunities are manifold and various as the characters and circumstances of Christians. "She hath done what she could," is the standard of measurement.

II. The motive. It is worthy of remark that the Apostle confesses frankly that he was kept at his work as a slave is by the sound of the whip behind him. Look at some of the particular forces that press a human soul to diligence in the work of the Lord. (1) The love of Christ constraining it; (2) the new appetite of the new creature; (3) the need of a sinning, suffering world. The life that is placed under the play of these three kindred powers will be an active life. These three may well stir the stiffest out of all his fastenings to the earth, and send him off, like flaming fire or stormy winds, on errands of mercy at God's command and for man's good.

W. Arnot, *The Anchor of the Soul*, p. 182.

References: ix. 17.—F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 207. ix. 22.—E. Jenkins, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiii., p. 280. ix. 24.—J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 81; F. W. Farrar, *In the Days of thy Youth*, p. 275; H. E. Manning, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 145; T. Kelly, *Pulpit Trees*, p. 283.

Chap. ix., vers. 24-7.

The Race and the Prize.

I. The prize, in the contest that St. Paul speaks of, is a different kind of prize from that which these Corinthians were seeking after in their games. It was not a light thing, as men call lightness, which these racers sought after. The man who seeks to be wondered at because he is so rich, or because he is so learned, or even because he is so kind and charitable,—this man seeks just the same sort of reward that the runners and

the wrestlers and the leapers and the throwers among the Corinthians coveted. St. Paul was a man who had as hard a fight to fight in this world as you have. Dreams would not have satisfied him any more than they would you; he wanted realities, he complained of the things men in general are seeking after, not because they are too substantial, but because they are not substantial enough, because there is no food in them to content the appetites of hungry men. He desired to know God, and desiring this he did not desire a vain thing; he desired the most real of all things—he desired that which the spirit of you and of me and of every man on this earth is desiring, and which we must have, or perish discontented and miserable.

II. I have shown you how this race differed from the race to which St. Paul compared it. Now I will show you wherein they are both alike. (1) They are alike in this, that the prize is set before all. (2) All run, but some only receive the prize. (3) The races resemble each other in the conduct of those who do win the race and obtain the prize. They keep under their bodies and bring them into subjection. St. Paul does not make it any merit to restrain the body from its indulgences and lusts: it is merely a point of wisdom which no one who is really in earnest, really means to seek God and His glory, can neglect. We do neglect it, alas! but we do it at our peril; we neglect it, because we neglect, at the same time, the thought of the glorious prize which God is offering us, that prize of being found in Christ, that prize of awaking up in His likeness, and of being satisfied with it.

F. D. MAURICE, *Christmas Day and Other Sermons*, p. 89.

Chap. ix., ver. 25.—"Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown but we an incorruptible."

I. WE may take it as an undoubted fact that Christianity does make a vast difference as regards self-denial, by strengthening and multiplying the motives which induce us to submit to it, and by infusing into each man a higher nature offering a Divine help which tends to make self-denial easy and delightful. But does Christianity, which so much increases our power to endure self-denial, make any alteration in our conception of the nature of self-denial? Does it turn it from a means into an end, or condemn pleasure as being in itself evil?

II. Before answering this I will revert to another consideration which distinguishes the self-denial of the believer from that

of the unbeliever. While the agnostic recognises a comparatively superficial duty to man alone, the Christian recognises besides a paramount and exhaustless duty to God. The secret of the Christian's strength is faith, the sight of Him who is invisible. But to maintain this faith with vigour much self-denial is required. With the Christian, as with other men, what is out of sight is in danger of being out of mind, and strong resolution and steady perseverance are needed to overcome this tendency. And besides the self-denial which is thus deliberately chosen, there is the self-denial which is impulsive. It was no thought either of duty or expediency which prompted David's refusal to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem when his soldiers brought it to him at the hazard of their lives. So it was neither duty nor expediency which caused St. Paul to rejoice that he was allowed to share in the sufferings of Christians; it was that delight to which none of us can be entirely strangers, the delight of sacrificing something for a friend, and so giving a deeper utterance to our affection, and, as it were, realising it to ourselves. I return now to the question I asked before. Must not a change like this, in the scope of self-denial, necessitate a change also in our conception of self-denial? The question is, which is the truer form of Christianity, ascetic Christianity in either of its developments, puritanic or monastic, or what we may call Shakespearian Christianity? In the Bible we never find the ascetic disposition reckoned among the fruits of the Spirit, nor do ascetic practices form a prominent portion of the Christian's armour. The virtues and duties on which our Lord and His apostles lay stress are the virtues and duties of every-day life. The great mischief of wrong asceticism is that it confounds men's ideas of right and wrong, and shuts them up in a little ecclesiastical world of their own, where vice and virtue are thrust into the background by a crowd of imaginary sins and imaginary virtues. Of such a system it may be said that Christianity has had few more dangerous enemies, whether we regard it in its effect on those who have accepted it or on those who have been repelled by it.

J. B. MAYOR, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Feb. 26th, 1880.

Chap. ix., ver. 25.—"Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things."

CHRISTIAN Temperance.

I. To be temperate, in the primary sense of the word, is to be under command, self-governed, to feel the reins of our

desires, and to be able to check them. It is obvious that this of itself implies a certain amount of prudence, to know when, at what point, to exercise this control. There is such a thing as negative as well as positive intemperance. God made His world for our use; He gave us our faculties to be employed. If we use not the one and employ not the other, then, though we do not usually call such an insensibility by the name of intemperance, it certainly is a breach of temperance, the very essence of which is to use God's bounties in moderation, to employ our faculties and desires, but so as to retain the guidance and check over them. And such being the pure moral definition of temperance, let us proceed to base it on Christian grounds, to ask *why* and *how* the disciple of Christ must be temperate.

II. Our text will give us ample reason why. The disciple of Christ is a combatant, contending in a conflict in which he has need of all the exercise of all his powers. He has ever, in the midst of a visible world, to be ruled and guided by his sense of a world invisible. For this purpose he needs to be vigilant and active. He cannot afford to have his faculties dulled by excess, or his energies relaxed by sloth. He strives for the mastery, and therefore he must be temperate in all things.

III. A Christian man must be temperate in his religion. It is not a passion, carrying him out of his place in life and its appointed duties; nor a fancy, leading him to all kinds of wild notions, requiring constant novelty to feed it and keep it from wearying him; nor, again, is it a charm, to be sedulously gone through as a balm to his conscience. It is a matter demanding the best use of his best faculties. Temperance must also be shown in the intellectual life, in opinions and in language. The end of all is our sanctification by God's Spirit to God's glory; the perfection, not of stoical morality, but of Christian holiness.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. v., p. 199.

REFERENCES: ix. 26.—E. M. Goulburn, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 191. ix. 27.—C. S. Robinson, *Sermons on Neglected Texts*, p. 108. x. 1.—G. T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 141. x. 1-5.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 481; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 89. x. 1-6.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 22; vol. viii., p. 88. x. 3, 4.—J. Edmunds, *Fifteen Sermons*, p. 164. x. 4.—C. Kingsley, *Town and Country Sermons*, p. 282; W. C. E. Newbolt, *Counsels of Faith and Practice*, p. 176; C. J. Elliott, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 53; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. iii., p. 87. x. 6.—Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 109. x. 7.—T. Wilkinson, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 1; R. L. Browne, *Sussex Sermons*, p. 95.

Chap. x., ver. 11.—"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

St. Paul makes his argument for the unity and permanence of the Scriptures and their suitableness for the ages in which they were *not* written depend upon the fact that the events which they recorded were sacraments of God's presence. And he makes this assertion the ground of direct moral exhortations against idolatry, against fornication, against murmuring, against that sin of tempting God in which all other sins may be included. In other words, the use of the Scriptures for what we should call the most plain practical purposes, as warnings against direct open crimes, as preservatives of a right inward temper, is deduced from what many at first sight would reject as a strange and fantastical estimate of their character.

I. I am sure that if the Scriptures are losing their hold on us, the cause of that enormous mischief lies very greatly in our confused apprehensions respecting what is called their direct and what is called their spiritual signification. The critic entrenches himself in philological laws and maxims, boldly maintaining that if the Bible history is a history it must bear to be tried by these. The sufferer on a sick-bed feels that the words speak directly to him or to her, and that that speech must be true, whatever becomes of the other. Each is liable to special narrownesses and temptations. The student quickly discerns the morbid and self-concentrated tendencies of the more devotional reader. The devotional reader feels instinctively how merely antiquarian the student is apt to be, how little he understands the wants of human beings. Neither is sufficiently alive to his own perils; neither sufficiently understands how much he needs the help of the other.

II. It is evident from this passage and from those which follow it, that St. Paul is speaking to the Corinthians expressly as a Church cemented by sacraments. He teaches that the passage through the Red Sea was a sign that the invisible God had taken the Jewish nation to be a people of inheritance to Himself. His object was to convince the Corinthians that they were not under a different spiritual government and constitution from that under which the Jewish fathers had lived. In all its principles and method it was the same. He who administered it was the same. The Christ whom Paul had preached to them as taking flesh, as dying, as rising, as ascending, was that Christ, that Angel of the Covenant, that Son of God, who had

led the Hebrew people in a pillar of cloud by day, who had followed them by night in a pillar of fire.

III. When we trace the Bible as the progressive history of God's revelations to a family, a nation, and to mankind, we shall understand more what support there is in it for us as men, what awful admonitions to us as men whom God has claimed, not as servants, but as sons. The sacraments told the Corinthians that they must not be content with the present or with the past, that God intended them for a more perfect communion with Him, that He intended to manifest Himself fully to the world. No lower belief, no feebler hope, can assuredly sustain us, upon whom the ends of the world are come. The Sacrifice has been made that we might look onward to that day, which is to wind up all the revelations and all the sacraments of God, when His servants shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 21.

REFERENCES: x. 11.—*Homilist*, 1st series, vol. vii., p. 188. x. 11, 12.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 31. x. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 22; J. Gleadall, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 47; E. J. Hardy, *Faint, yet Pursuing*, p. 190; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 74; J. W. Colenso, *Village Sermons*, p. 28. x. 13.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 25; Caleb Morris, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iii., p. 737; F. W Farrar, *Silence and Voices of God*, p. 101. x. 15.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. i., p. 327; J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 156; J. H. Hitchens, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 420. x. 16.—A. Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 36; *Sermons on the Catechism*, p. 264. x. 17.—G. Calthrop, *Words Spoken to my Friends*, p. 177; C. P. Reichel, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 306. x. 18.—R. S. Candlish, *The Gospel of Forgiveness*, p. 356. x. 21.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 241. x. 23.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 267. x. 24.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 250.

Chap. x., ver. 27.—"If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no questions for conscience' sake."

FREE to Amusements and too Free to want Them.

I. I discover two points, included in the advice Paul gives, neither of which stands out on the face of his words, but they need only be named to be distinctly seen. The first is that, down on the low plane of mere ethical observance, he does not think it incumbent on him as a teacher of the gospel to enforce any puritanically close terms of restrictive morality. It is not for him to legislate over such questions. In this field the disciples must have their own liberty, and be responsible for their own judgments and the right understanding of their own

liabilities. So far the world's law is also theirs, and he will not undertake at all to settle the casuistries occurring under it. And to set them on a yet manlier footing of liberty, he shoves restriction still farther away by telling them, when they accept such an invitation, to go with a free mind, hampered by no foolish scruples that will make them an annoyance both to the host and the company. So far, then, he sets them free—free, that is, in the exercise of their own responsible judgment, clear of any mere scruples not intelligent. But we have scarcely noted the position given them under this liberty, when we begin to see that he is thinking of a second higher kind of liberty for them, which in his own view makes the other quite insignificant. Thus he drops in, as it were in undertone, at the middle of his sentence this very brief but very significant clause, "and ye be disposed to go," putting, I conceive, a partly sad cadence in his words, as if saying inwardly, I trust not many will be so disposed; for the dear love of God, in the glorious liberty of our discipleship, ought to be a liberty too full and sweet and positive and blessed to allow any such hankering after questionable pleasures and light-minded gaieties.

II. The question of amusements appears to be very nearly settled by the tenor of the distinctively Christian life itself. The Christian, in so far as he is a Christian, is not down upon the footing of a mere ethical practice, asking what he may do and what he is restricted from doing under the legal sanctions of morality. That kind of morality has very much gone by, but of his mere liberty in love he will do more and better things than all codes of ethics and moral law commandments require of him. He is so united to God himself, through Christ and the Spirit, that he has all duty in him by a free inspiration. It is not the question whether we are bound thus and thus, in terms of morality, and so obliged to abstain, but whether, as our new and nobler life implies, we are not required, in full fidelity, to pay it honour, and keep its nobler tastes unmarred by descending to that which they have so far left behind them.

H. BUSHNELL, *Sermons on Living Subjects*, p. 374.

REFERENCES: x. 27, 28.—*Homilist*, 1st series, vol. v., p. 391. x. 29.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 266.

Chap. x., ver. 31.—"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

WHEN persons are convinced that life is short, that it is unequal to any great purpose, that it does not display adequately

or bring to perfection the true Christian, when they feel that the next life is all in all and that eternity is the only subject that really can claim or can fill their thoughts, then they are apt to undervalue this life altogether and to forget its real importance; they are apt to wish to spend the time of their sojourning here in a positive separation from active and social duties. Yet it should be recollected that the employments of this world, though not in themselves heavenly, are, after all, the way to heaven, though not the fruit, are the seed of immortality, and are valuable, though not in themselves, yet for that to which they lead; but it is difficult to realise this. It is difficult to realise both truths at once, and to connect both truths together; steadily to contemplate the life to come, yet to act in this. Those who meditate are likely to neglect those active duties which are in fact incumbent on them, and to dwell upon the thought of God's glory till they forget to act to His glory. This state of mind is chided in figure in the words of the holy angels to the apostles, when they say, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?"

I. "Do all to the glory of God," says St. Paul in the text; nay, "whether we eat or drink," so that it appears nothing is too slight or trivial to glorify Him in. The true penitent will say to himself, "If mine be an irksome employment, so much the more does it suit *me*. I deserve no better. I will take this light inconvenience in a generous way, pleased at the opportunity of disciplining myself, and with self-abasement as needing a severe penitence."

II. A second reason which will animate the Christian will be a desire of letting his light shine before men. He will aim at winning others by his own diligence and activity. He will say to himself, "My parents, or my master, or employer shall never say of me, Religion has spoiled him. They shall see me more active and alive than before. I will be punctual and attentive, and adorn the gospel of God our Saviour."

III. Thankfulness to Almighty God, nay, and the inward life of the Spirit itself, will be additional principles causing the Christian to labour diligently in his calling. He will see God in all things. He will recollect our Saviour's life. He will feel that the true contemplation of his Saviour lies *in* his worldly business; that in attending to his own calling he will be meeting Christ; that if he neglect it, he will not on that account enjoy His presence all the more, but that while performing it he will see Christ revealed to his soul amid the ordinary actions

of the day as by a sort of sacrament. Thus he will take his worldly business as a gift from Him, and will love it as such.

IV. True humility is another principle which will lead us to desire to glorify God in our worldly employments if possible, instead of resigning them.

V. Still further, the Christian will use his worldly business as a means of keeping him from vain and unprofitable thoughts. Leisure is the occasion of all evil. Idleness is the first step in the downward course which leads to hell.

VI. Lastly, we see what judgment to give in a question sometimes agitated, whether we should retire from our worldly business at the close of life to give our thoughts more entirely to God. The Christian will be content to do without these blessings, and the highest Christian of all is he whose heart is so stayed on God that he does not wish or need them, whose heart is so set on things above that things below as little excite, agitate, unsettle, distress, and seduce him as they stop the course of nature, as they stop the sun and moon, or change summer and winter.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. viii., p. 154.

THE lesson of the text is this: Religion ought to mingle with and guide all the affairs of life, and cannot be safely dispensed with in any department of our existence.

I. Let everything we do show the intention of God in our existence. Does your life tell what is God's intention with it?

II. Let everything be done in obedience to God.

III. Let all things be so done that when they are completed they shall be to the praise of God's wisdom, power, and love.

T. JONES, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 161.

REFERENCES: x. 31.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. v., p. 268; A. D. Davidson, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 18; E. M. Goulburn, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 122; W. J. Knox-Little; *Characteristics of the Christian Life*, p. 197; R. Abercrombie, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 218; T. Jones, *Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 161; C. Kingsley, *Village Sermons*, p. 155; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 129. x. 33.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 173. x. 35.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 44. xi. 1.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 353; W. M. Taylor, *Paul the Missionary*, p. 540; R. W. Church, *The Gifts of Civilisation*, p. 80. xi. 3.—E. W. Shalders, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 234. xi. 10.—W. C. E. Newbolt, *Counsels of Faith and Practice*, p. 191; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 71. xi. 14.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 42. xi. 18.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 165. xi. 23-6.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ix., p. 102; J. H. Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 29; *Clergyman's*

Magazine, vol. viii., p. 154. xi. 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 2; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 117; A. Maclaren, *Christian Commonwealth*, No. 112. xi. 25.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 136.

Chap. xi., ver. 26.—"Ye do show the Lord's death."

I. It is a very wonderful fact, very startling at first sight to those who have not steadily considered it, that the chief ordinance of Christianity is the commemoration and proclamation of a death. Festivals of the nativity, of the resurrection, of the ascension, however beautiful may be their meaning and benign their influence, are at any rate not of Divine institution. The feast which Christ instituted is the proclamation to all ages of His death. Most surely our Lord must have intended to indicate thereby that feature of His work which He conceived to be in most vital relation to the accomplishment of His great hope for man. The death rather than the life, the life as looking on to the death and to all that was to spring from it, and the death as the most fruitful act and the most powerful instrument of His love, must be the chief fountain of peace, joy, and hope for mankind.

II. If this be true, if the Lord's death be the most luminous, the most blessed, the most quickening act of His life, truly and most deeply a birth into the eternal sphere, it casts most beautiful light upon our life and our death. The man who knew most deeply God's counsel about life, whose human life grew richer, grander, more pregnant with a glorious hope as the earthly element dropped piece-meal into the tomb, made this his aspiration and his prayer—"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." No lives are so drearily cheerless as those which have been successful in the sole pursuit of gold; no future so blank as theirs, no eternity so dread. Look round on your supremely successful men. Estimate the number of rays of pure joy that shine upon their hearts and break the dreary gloom of their lives, and compare them with the man whose life is one deep-voiced hymn of triumph—"I thank my God, through Jesus Christ my Lord," because I have learnt from Him, through His death, to call that life, and that only, which is eternal.

J. Baldwin Brown, *The Sunday Afternoon*, p. 219.

References: xi. 26.—G. Calthrop, *Pulpit Recollections*, p. 207; W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 356; S. Minton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 42; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 283; vol. iv., p. 224;

vol. vi., p. 83; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 228; F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 111; T. Birkett Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 151; *Sermons on the Catechism*, p. 242.

Chap. xi., ver. 27.

THE absence of teaching on the subject of the Holy Communion in the Epistles is no argument that the Holy Communion was an unimportant part of Divine worship in apostolic days. It only bears witness to the fact, which we know very well from other sources, that the Holy Communion was that part of a Christian's duty and privilege in early days which he was least likely to neglect. So far as I have observed, there are only two places in which direct reference is made to the subject; they are both in the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

I. In the first the circumstances were these. Some of the Corinthians had been induced to take part in idol worship: at least, they had done so indirectly. They were not easy in their consciences about the matter; they fancied that after all it might possibly be wrong, and they applied to St. Paul for a determination of the difficulty. St. Paul solved the difficulty by explaining to them that, as in joining in Holy Communion they really became partakers of Christ, so in joining in an idol feast they really became partakers of idolatry. St. Paul was led to speak of the Holy Communion because the Corinthians had done something which they ought not to have done, because they had brought disgrace on their Christian name, and because the privilege which they enjoyed as partakers of Christ in the Holy Communion was the best proof possible of the manner in which their Christian name had been disgraced.

II. How came it that the Apostle wrote the latter part of chap. xi.? The reason is obvious enough. The most horrible abuses had crept into the Corinthian Church: men did not discern the Lord's body; they treated His table as a common table, made it a table of revelry; they ate and drank unworthily, and so received condemnation to themselves. It is this horrible profanity to which we are indebted for St. Paul's views on the subject of the Lord's Supper.

III. When he did take the subject in hand how did he treat it? He went back at once to the first institution of the Holy Sacrament by the Lord Himself. He deals in no harsh and severe language; he simply recounts the history of what our blessed Lord did on the eve of His passion. He put more faith in the recital of this simple tale than in any strong language he could use. You can add nothing which will give the argument

more strength, and you can find no better commentary upon the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 5th series, p. 335.

REFERENCES: xi. 27.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 96. xi. 28.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 4th series, p. 40; *Sermons on the Catechism*, p. 285. xi. 29.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons to English Congregations in India*, p. 207; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 183; R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 350. xi. 30.—G. Salmon, *Gnosticism and Agnosticism*, p. 100. xi. 31.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 18. xi. 31, 32.—E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 216. xi. 32.—E. White, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 50.

Chap. xi., ver. 33.—"Tarry one for another."

I. TARRY for the young. Do not consider that religion consists all in correct thinking, defined belief, mature experience, manly and womanly strength. It has its beginnings in youthful struggles, in wonder, in simplicity, in teachableness, in sorrowing, in longing, in following. And you cannot look for the steady tread of those who have been long in the way in the case of those who are just coming into it; you cannot expect them to keep up with the manly and the strong. "Tarry one for another."

II. Tarry for the weak. We ought to be as the weak themselves, and carry them along with us as we go. We ought to be willing to be carried if we are the weak, and thus we ought to tarry one for another. Some are fainting, but when they have rested awhile they will come. Some are hungry; when they are fed they will be stronger. Some have been sick; nothing can recruit them but time and gracious weather and kindly nourishment.

III. Tarry for the doubting. Not for the captious and the insincere, but for those who are honestly and earnestly seeking for light. A man may doubt while he loves the truth, but in this case he is sure to be led into it in the end. Tarry for him.

IV. Tarry for the stricken, for the afflicted, and the sorrowful, and those that are wounded in spirit. As the great Sufferer, now the great Conqueror, waits for all, let us wait for one another.

V. There is a sublimer waiting yet—of the whole Church for the whole world. The Church can never submit herself to the world, but the world shall ground its weapons and hold out the hand of friendship to the Church, and the conciliation shall be perfect, followed by no severance or estrangement.

A. RALEIGH, *The Way to the City*, p. 34.

Chap. xii., ver. 1.—"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant."

I. No man can even profess Christianity without the help of the Holy Spirit. It is something even to profess to be a Christian, to make a clear statement even of doctrinal truths which have entered very deeply into the heart. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." The mere convictions of our intellects are not in our own power. The strongest arguments might not convince a man, unless the Holy Spirit of God was at hand to add force to the argument, and to enable the man, by spiritual help, to say that Jesus is the Lord.

II. If we believe our creeds and the doctrine of Whit Sunday, we shall, all through our lives, recognise the presence and working and power of the Holy Spirit of God; but then, if we are to have any real conviction of this spiritual operation amongst the people of God for the salvation of souls, how must our thoughts be occupied? Not with the things seen and temporal, but with the things unseen, which are eternal. He who would be able to realise the working of the Spirit of God must endeavour not only to think of spiritual gifts, but of the spiritual world. It is a proverb among the Germans that beyond the hills are people living. Men are apt to suppose that in the narrow valley in which they pass their days all life and activity is concentrated; but beyond the hills, where the sun sets, there are other nations full of life and spirit; and his mind is cramped and confined who thinks only of the narrow district in which he lives. Far beyond all material creation, there is a spiritual world, where God the Father dwells, and where the Lord Jesus Christ is on His right hand. And do we not feel and know that all the highest impulses of our souls come direct from the spiritual world, and that the Lord who died for us fulfils in every honest Christian heart the promise which He gave, making all good men to become better, through the working of the Holy Spirit of God?

A. C. Tait, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 1.

References: xii. 1.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 81; H. P. Liddon, *Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 321. xii. 1-31.—F. W Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 168.

Chap. xii., ver. 3.—"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

A Test of True Inspiration.

It is not easy at first to understand St. Paul's object in this

passage. He seems to be laying down, first of all, a truism about which there can be no discussion whatever, and next, a proposition as to the truth of which there is apparently very large room for question. St. Paul himself is conscious that he is saying something which might not at first sight approve itself to his readers, or which, at the least, requires their careful attention. The phrase "I give you to understand" is one of those turns of speech which he employs when he wishes to stir the minds of men to an unusual effort.

I. "No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed." There were Corinthians who claimed to speak on the prompting of the Spirit, and who, when in a state of ecstasy, exclaimed, "Accursed be Jesus." These Corinthians were almost certainly Jews who had mixed a great deal with Christians, and who had caught something of the enthusiasm which was created within the Church by the presence of the extraordinary gifts vouchsafed to it. In this sentence we have a warning, first, against a false liberalism, and, secondly, we have a warning against thinking too much of religious passions. Just as the prophets in the synagogue said "Jesus is accursed," so the Christians meeting in the house of Justus cried "Jesus is the Lord."

II. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Why is this? Why cannot a man recognise the divinity of Jesus by the exercise of his natural faculties, and when he has recognised it say that he has done so? Why must the Holy Spirit intervene to teach this any more than other kinds of truth? The reason is twofold. It is found partly in the understanding of man and partly in his will. (1) The will has an intelligent instinct of its own. We believe, at least to a great extent, that which we wish to believe; and we wish to believe, most of us, that which will not cost us much in the way of effort or in the way of endurance. We wish this and no more, always supposing us to be left to ourselves with the average human nature and instinct which our first father has bequeathed to us. The Holy Spirit must intervene so far as to restore freedom to the human will, thereby preventing its mischievous action upon the understanding. The greater the practical demands of a given truth the more needed is the high impartiality of the will; and, therefore, in no case is it more necessary than in that of believing our Lord's divinity, which, when it is really believed, leads to so much and demands so much. (2) A second reason is found in the understanding. If

a man was to rise above the prejudices of the time—if he was to see what those words, those acts, that character really meant—if he was to understand how the Cross was as much a revelation of Divine love as the Transfiguration was a revelation of Divine glory, he must have been guided by a more than human teacher; he must have been taught by the Spirit to say, "Jesus is the Lord."

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1116.

I. THE Jews resisted the light of the Holy Ghost and His grace soliciting them from without; Christians, if they reject that same truth, reject Him as teaching within also. The Jews had the condemnation that they rejected truth which they might have known; Christians have that much sorer condemnation that they reject truth already known and attested by those whom they once knew to have come from God. Light, against which the eyes have been often closed, will still not unseldom, in God's mercy, reach the eyes which shut themselves against it; very rare is it that the eyes will open to see the truth which they once saw and rejected.

II. Let us guard the truth, not as lords over it, to adapt it, as a Lesbian rule, to all the passing phases of human opinion or conjecture, but as itself the unerring eternal rule, to which all human opinion, when corrected by God-enlightened reason, the mirror of the wisdom of God must conform. Christianity being the offspring not of human, but of Divine wisdom, its life also is Divine, maintained, alike in the world and in each heart, by the Lord and Giver of life, God the Holy Ghost. This being so, then the most stupendous and central unwisdom of our day must be the ignorant ignoring of Him who is our light and life. Our generation is so busy with matter that it can afford no time for spirit. What is spiritual seems to it unreal, because "beyond the grasp of eye and hand." Men are so busy with their researches, so certain of the process, that it does not occur to them to think that their foregone conclusion may be wrong, that they may be following an earthly meteor hovering round morasses, instead of the clear light of truth, set by God to rule over day and night.

E. B. PUSEY, *University Sermons*, p. 463.

REFERENCES: xii. 3.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 89; vol. vii., p. 84; F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 29. xii. 3-6.—C. Kingsley, *Town and Country Sermons*, p. 290; G. Salmon, *Sermons in Trinity College, Dublin*, p. 107. xii. 3-7.—H. Scott Holland, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 155. xii. 4.—E. C. Wickham.

Wellington College Sermons, p. 122. xii. 4, 5.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 204. xii. 4-6.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 99; R. S. Candlish, *The Sonship and Brotherhood of Believers*, pp. 299, 312; J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, 2nd series, p. 225; E. Hatch, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 1; T. Kelly, *Pulpit Trees*, p. 67. xii. 4-7.—A. W. Momerie, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 348; A. Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 395. xii. 9.—W. G. Horder, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 61. xii. 11.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 45; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. vi., p. 109. xii. 12.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vii., p. 87; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 308; J. B. Lightfoot, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 117; E. M. Goulburn, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 312.

Chap. xii., ver. 13.—"By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

REGENERATING Baptism.

As there is one Holy Ghost, so there is one only visible body of Christians which Almighty God "knows by name" and one baptism which admits men into it. This is implied in the text, which is nearly parallel to St. Paul's words in the Ephesians: "There is one body, and one Spirit, . . . one baptism." But more than this is taught us in it: not only that the Holy Ghost is in the Church, and that baptism admits into it; but that the Holy Ghost admits by means of baptism, that the Holy Ghost baptizes: in other words, that each individual member receives the Holy Ghost as a preliminary step or condition or means of his being incorporated into the Church, or, in our Saviour's words, that no one can enter, except he be regenerated in order to enter it.

I. When men refuse to admit the doctrine of baptismal regeneration in the case of infants they look about how they may defend infant baptism, which perhaps from habit, good feeling, or other causes they do not like to abandon. Surely, if we go to Scripture, the question is decided at once, for no one can deny that there is much more said in Scripture on behalf of the connection between baptism and Divine grace than about the duty of infant baptism. If the doctrine and the practice are irreconcilable—baptismal regeneration and infant baptism—let the practice which is not written in Scripture yield to the doctrine which is; and let us (if we can bear to do so) defraud infants of baptism, not baptism of its supernatural virtue. Let us go counter to tradition rather than to Scripture.

II. The partly assumed and partly real parallel of circumcision comes in fact, whether they know it or not, as a sort of refuge to those who have taken up the intermediate position between

catholic doctrine and heretical practice. They avail themselves of the instance of circumcision as a proof that a divinely appointed ordinance need not convey grace, even while it admits into a state of grace. Circumcision admitted to certain privileges —to the means of grace, to teaching, and the like; baptism, they consider, does the same, and no more. The plain objection to this view is that Christ and His apostles do attach a grace to the ordinance of baptism such as is not attached in the Old Testament to circumcision—which is exactly that difference which makes the latter a mere rite, the former a sacrament; and if this be so, it is nothing to the purpose to build up an argument on the assumption that the two ordinances are precisely the same.

III. If baptism has no spiritual value, can it be intended for us Christians? If it has no regenerating power, surely they only are consistent who reject it altogether! I will boldly say it, we have nothing dead and earthly under the gospel, and we act like the Judaizing Christians of old time if we submit to anything such; therefore they only are consistent who, denying the virtue of baptism, also deny its authority as a permanent ordinance of the gospel. Either baptism is an instrument of the Holy Ghost, or it has no place in Christianity.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 271.

REFERENCES: xii. 13.—Collyer, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 116. xii. 14.—A. Murray, *The Fruits of the Spirit*, p. 312. xii. 14-20. —R. A. Armstrong, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiii., p. 141. xii. 14-21.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 171. xii. 22.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 86. xii. 24.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 107. xii. 25-7.—L. Campbell, *Some Aspects of the Christian Ideal*, p. 55.

Chap. xii., ver. 26.—"Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it."

SOCIAL Responsibility.

There are three great principles which ought to govern a Christian's thought in his estimate of a great criminal case.

I. Of these the first is, that every criminal is, to a certain extent, the product of his age, of the spirit of the society in which he has passed his life. Just as certain marshy districts and damp atmospheres are favourable to the growth of troublesome or malignant insects or diseases, so particular moods of popular feeling and opinion are as certainly favourable to the growth of crime. This is, of course, a doctrine which may be pushed too far. No criminal is simply and altogether the helpless, unconscious product of his circumstances. To suppose that

would be a libel on the justice of God. But still we have contributed by remote and subtle channels to make the criminal what he is; and if we knew the true area of our responsibilities, we ought to feel that his error, his suffering, is in some sense our own. If the one member suffer, all should suffer with him.

II. And a second principle which should govern our thoughts about great crime is, that in the sight of God, the Eternal Justice, all guilt is relative to a man's opportunities.

III. Akin to this consideration is a third, which a Christian will keep steadily in mind when he hears of a great criminal case. It is the deep sincere conviction of his own real condition as a sinner beneath the eye of God. That which was so offensive to our Lord in the Pharisees, which He rebuked so severely and so often, was the substitution of a conventional and outward test of religious excellence for an internal and true one. They did their works that they might be seen of men. Now, this corresponds to much of the religious responsibility of our day, which never really gets below the surface of life, or asks itself seriously what God is thinking moment by moment, and all that He sees not merely in the outward life, but within the precincts of the soul. When a Christian has learnt something real and accurate about himself he has no heart to be hard on others. The man who knows anything about his own heart will not suppose that the Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices were sinners above all the Galileans; or that the eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell were exceptionally wicked. He knows that he has too much in common with these men to feel that. He knows that he deserves what they have experienced, though it may be for other reasons, and therefore, if they suffer, he, in his heart and mind, suffers with them, if only from the sensitive activity of his sense of justice.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 727.

Chap. xii., ver. 26.—"**And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.**"

ST. PAUL would have the Corinthians struggle incessantly, not to create a new order for themselves, but that they might not in every act of their lives be contradicting that order to which they eventually belonged.

I. And what is that order? St. Paul takes the simplest method one can conceive for making us understand what it is. He leads us to notice obvious facts, which every one admits, and not only

admits, but is compelled by the keenest experience to recognise every moment. He asks us to consider the structure of our bodies—not any secrets about them which anatomists and physiologists may know—but what every mechanic must know. He says that each of our members or limbs has a power or work of its own; that no other limb can put forth the same power or do the same work. Here surely are laws of the universe—laws concerning our own selves, which no one can reverse. The practitioner in medicines or surgery does not aspire to alter these facts. He conforms himself to them, he regulates his treatment in accordance with them.

II. Then the Apostle goes on—to do what? He goes on to speak of other facts as nearly concerning each one of us individually, as nearly concerning the whole race, about which he can appeal to the same conscience and experience, which he can submit to the same test and trial. He does not ask any special field for the proof and examination of them. He asks for no choice spot which the winds of heaven do not visit too roughly. He takes the world as he finds it. A Greek city with all its corruptions, the Roman empire with its tyranny, answer his purpose better than an Atlantis. There are members of the body politic, as certainly as there are members or limbs of the body natural. Each man is such a member or limb. Each man has a function or office assigned to him in the body politic, as the hand or foot has in the natural body. One man may as little do the work of another, as the hand can do the work of the foot. And here, too, the many members can never make us forget the one body.

III. This description of St. Paul does not presuppose perfection, but rather presupposes imperfection. The Jews had discovered the existence of a law of fellowship between human beings. They had proved that that law was liable to constant violation. They had proved that its violation brought misery upon him who was guilty of it, as well as upon those whose claim upon him he had refused to acknowledge. They had *not* shown how that witness of prophets respecting a Divine Word and Ruler over their nation could be actually fulfilled for the benefit of all nations; they had *not* shown who was the centre and head of the body with its many members; they had *not* shown whence could come a power strong enough to make their cohesion to each other real and practical, strong enough to overcome the tendency in each member to rend itself from the rest. It is this hiatus in the lore of past ages which St. Paul

fills up when he says, "Now are ye the body of Christ, and members in particular." He had said before in this chapter, "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." All artificial significations which have been given to the Church shall perish. *This* signification which connects it with the natural body, which identifies it with the universal body politic, of which Christ is the Head, because He is the Head of every man, shall remain.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 263.

REFERENCES: xii. 26.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 133; J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 5.

Chap. xii., ver. 27.—"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

I. THE Church is the body in which Christ dwells as the soul, lighting up the body with His Divine presence, the organisation of this tabernacle being the sanctified tabernacle of flesh and blood in which Christ shall dwell, from whose lips He shall speak, whose hands He shall employ, and whose feet shall bear the manhood and the influences of His life through the world around: the organisation that He shall make use of to extend the interests of His kingdom, and from which the majesty and glory of His dominion shall be extended through the neighbourhood around. Christ dwells in the Church, the Fountain of its life, the centre of its power—"that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

II. If this be so, the Church as the body should reflect and manifest the expression of the Divine soul within. It should ever be prepared to respond to the Divine will. My action does not spring from the body, but from the mind and will within. It is from that action originates, that to which action is subordinate, and of which it is the manifestation. And so it should be with the Church as the body of Christ, ever responding to the will of the Divine Spirit within, and offering all its powers to the service, adoration, and worship of the Divine power, to which it may well be contributory, and to whose glory it shall ever be subordinate. If the Church is the body of Christ, it is to do His bidding, to accomplish His purpose, to live to His glory.

III. The Church is the body of Christ, then: (1) There is her Divine safety; (2) her Divine blessedness; (3) her Divine

honour and glory; (4) the activity by which she ought to be distinguished.

J. P. CHOWN, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 264.

THE Christian Idea of Man.

I. What is the nature, the meaning of our human life? The words of the text seem to give the answer which we need. We look upon our nature, borne heavenward by splendid aspirations, crushed down by a miserable load of failures, conscious of a Divine kinsmanship, conscious of personal transgressions, and it tells us: "Ye are the body of Christ, Son of God and Son of man." We look upon our lives, fragmentary, imperfect, involved, with capacities which enjoyment cannot satisfy, with attainments which are only a shadow of our desires, and it tells us: "Ye are severally members thereof." But Divine connection is the revelation of our being, the interpretation of our partial service given to us first in the fiat of creation, given to us afresh out of the darkness and the glory of the Cross; fellowship with God, fellowship with man in God, through Christ. We feel that we are a result and a beginning; we acknowledge the power of the race, and we treasure the gift of personality. We, too, share in a larger life; but that we may do so according to the will of God we use the individuality of our own life. We are a body—"the body of Christ, and severally members thereof."

II. As Christians, we believe that the contrasts which are represented by the thoughts of the solidarity of mankind and the individuality of each single man are harmonised in the Incarnation. As Christians, we believe that social responsibility and personal responsibility belong equally to each citizen of the Divine commonwealth and correspond with the fulness of His manifold life. While we ponder the elements of our creed we realise little by little the promise which it seals of some revelation which interprets to us our nature, and our nature furnishes us also with a new rule and a new motive for action. The Christian idea of man brings us the sense of brotherhood, which is the measure of our efforts, the sense of brotherhood with the Son of man, which is their support.

BISHOP WESTCOTT, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 177.

REFERENCES: xii. 27.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 388. xii. 28.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 777. xii. 31.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. x., p. 330; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 351; R. Tuck, *Ibid.*, vol. xix., p. 248; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*,

p. 373; G. Salmon, *Sermons in Trinity College, Dublin*, p. 55; F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 73; R. W. Church, *The Gifts of Civilisation*, p. 5.

Chap. xii., ver. 31; xiii., ver. 1.

St. Paul has been treating of spiritual gifts as they then existed in the Church—of tongues, of prophecy, and the like. They were things to be courted and attained if it might be so. Still, there was one thing better; one way of living and proceeding, which was far in excess of all these; a way of living and preaching which could do without gifts, but they could not do without it. And by enlarging on the latter negative fact he opens his description. He will show them this more excellent way, by asserting first how worthless every gift, every attainment, is without it, and in its absence.

I. Verse 1 supposes the existence of the very highest supernatural gifts without largeness of love in the spirit and character. I take this verse to represent for us the endowment, as we understand it, with pre-eminent external gifts—gifts of accomplishment and acquirement to be shown and exercised before men. For of that kind was the gift of tongues. Let me not be understood as for a moment casting a slur on any of the elements of a liberal education, or as recognising the false and narrow view, which would measure that which is really useful to a man by so much only as is worn and torn in the great outward struggle of life. But if it be true that all these without Christian love are nothing, and that Christian love does not come by nature, but must be sought by culture, and by seeking God's blessing on diligent practice of it; then we have a right to expect that accomplishments and acquirements shall not be accounted the first thing, nor hold the first rank, but shall all be subordinated to the formation of this Christian character.

II. Is there not something very wrong in our land and our Church in this matter? We are not seeking after, we are not valuing, we are not encouraging, we are not even tolerating, the practice of large-hearted, universal, all-enduring Christian love. Hard thoughts are our common thoughts; bitter words our current words. Let us dare, knowing what we do, in a bitter and gainsaying generation, to maintain that love is first and midst and last in the Christian's practice.

H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 104.

References: xiii. 1.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, p. 191; J. Thain Davidson, *Talks with Young Men*,

p. 61; E. H. Bradby, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 134. xiii. 1, 2.—W. T. Bull, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 406; T. Kelly, *Pulpit Trees*, p. 267. xiii. 1-3.—W. M. Statham, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 20; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 58. xiii. 1-8.—J. Halsey, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxv., p. 168. xiii. 1-13.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 235. xiii. 2.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 433; T. Gasquoine, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 296; J. G. Rogers, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvi., p. 376.

Chap. xiii., ver. 3.

THE statement of the text appears at first sight even to surpass in paradox those which precede it. For to one superficially considering the matter it seems almost impossible that a Christian man should bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and even give his body to be burned in self-sacrifice for country or friends, or the cause of Christ, and be destitute of the Christian grace of love. Yet, notwithstanding this paradoxical appearance, our text will clear up as we advance.

I. "If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor." The Apostle gives us this extreme example to cover by it all others, and to show that much less will they profit under the same defect. Let us take a few of them and trace the character described. Outward liberality may arise from various reasons. (1) A man may be liberal from the mere bent of his natural disposition. He may give to satisfy his wish and ease his desire of giving; true Christian charity gives in self-denial, often withholding where nature prompts to give, often giving where nature would fain withhold. (2) It is obvious that a man may bestow all his goods to feed the poor out of motives of mere display. (3) There may be a conscientious, a God-fearing bestowal, yet exercised in a hard rigid spirit of duty and legal obligation, without kindliness of heart or manner; just as we may deposit the seed, and the plant may appear, but may after all be nipped by unkindly skies and winds.

II. "If I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." The idea evidently is, of great sacrifices made, hardships undergone, privations and sufferings submitted to. It varies from the former one in this: that there the goods were sacrificed, here the person. All toil, all self-denial, all sacrifice, without love, profiteth nothing. Well, indeed, might it be written, that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," when it is so difficult for a man to deny himself without at the same time indulging himself, when that Divine grace which should be at the root of all self-sacrifice

can be personated by its very opposite, and the counterfeit pass current with a man's self and with the Church of God!

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 133.

REFERENCES: xiii. 3.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 89. xiii. 4.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 111.

Chap. xiii., vers. 4, 5.

I. "LOVE envieth not." Envy is the shadow of jealousy, apes its form and mimics its movements, but is constructed out of more airy material and clothed in darker garb. The jealous man grudges another advantages which he claims for his own; the envious man, advantages which he never dreams of as his own. Jealousy would do harm for self's sake; envy, for mere harm's sake. So the jealousy is the more selfish and human; envy, the more abandoned and diabolical. Christian love envieth not.

II. "Love vaunteth not itself." This quality is expressed in the original by a rare and remarkable word, the exact meaning of which it is somewhat difficult to assign. "Displayeth not itself" would be nearer the point. He who would love must be self-renouncing. All true love is a self-sacrifice where love is general; self-seeking cannot be general also. But with those who love display, self-seeking is general and unfailing. Self is ever before them as an object to be served, and to be surrounded by a halo of the good opinions of others. Love neither claims honour to self where others interfere, nor is solicitous for that honour in general.

III. Love is not puffed up, not only does not exhibit self, but has not any high thoughts of self at all. If we would possess this first Christian grace, we must study and strive and pray that the all-powerful force of God's spirit may dwell and rule in our hearts, and obliterate that vanity and self-regard from which we are never safe under the influence of merely this world's benevolence.

IV. "Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own." Christian love is on all occasions mindful of apparently slight proprieties of tone and manner and behaviour. There is no self-display, there is no self-merit, there is no unseemly behaviour, just because there is no self-seeking in the character

H. ALFORD, *Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 130.

REFERENCES: xiii. 4-6.—S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 1; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 318.

Chap. xiii., vers. 4-7.

"Love Suffereth Long, and is Kind."

I. We have here brought before us the two sides, the passive and the active sides, of a loving disposition. "Love suffereth long." It is perhaps remarkable that this feature should be presented to us first of all, as if suffering, enduring some trial, were a matter of course. It reads us a lesson as to the kind of world in which we Christians have to live. The true Christian knows, and will know, no limit to his endurance. It is not his *good fortune* that he can put up with this or that much of provocation, but it is his principle to do it. He practises and prays over it, and he goes and does it. Some of the noblest victories which the Church has seen of habitual forbearance and unfailing longsuffering have been hard victories, gained over a rebellious and unkindly disposition; battles for right, and won by men, with whom they were indeed battles, with whom, not only their own propensities, but friends around them, and the world in which they were dwelling, placed barriers almost insuperable against their exercise of this first of Christian graces. One Christian who thus reflects his Master's image calm and unbroken will win more souls to Christ than ten of those who hate the sinner by discountenancing the sin.

II. "Love is kind." The word by which this is expressed is a somewhat remarkable one. It signifies, in its simple and first meaning, "practises rendering of service," "practises kindness," and that sort of kindness which is good and profitable and cheering and consoling. So that this kindness of which it is said, "Love suffereth long, and is kind," is no mere blandness of manner, nor soothing tone of voice, though these naturally enter in as part of such kindness; but it is a willingness to be serviceable and to help others, an easiness of access, an easiness of being entreated, and genial, open, sunny presence, not repelling, not precluding application for help. All have it in their power to suffer long and to show substantial kindness.

H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 150.

References: xiii. 4-7.—J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, 2nd series, p. 121; E. Gifford, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 113; E. J. Hardy, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiii., p. 153; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 93. xiii. 4-8.—B. Jowitt, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 392.

Chap. xiii., ver. 5.—"Love seeketh not her own."

Individual Faithfulness.

I. No sincere worker for God is long left with nothing to do;

for God's ways and works are very manifold. Martha is working one way while she is providing for her Lord, Mary at another while she listens humbly at His feet. Savonarola serves his Lord in one way with his mighty thunderings; Fra Angelico in another with his soft pictures. The man with one talent may more laudably and more faithfully serve God than he with five.

II. This faithfulness is incumbent on every one of us. Think not that to do our duty in life, to give back to God something better than the crumbling dust of corrupting bodies and the leprosy of dwarfed and dwindling souls, needs, on our part, any magnificent theatre, any superhuman endeavour, any unobtainable eminences. That is not it: it needs only to travel round the quiet walk with God, to which every one of us is pledged by baptism. Externals will not save us; neither fast nor feast, nor service, nor general respectability, nor religious scrupulosity, nor to bow the head like a bulrush, nor to say "Lord, Lord"; nor will anything avail us but that life of obedience which is the true test of the forgiven penitent.

III. Beyond all doubt it is carelessness as to individual duties which makes the world what it is. It is the neglect which comes of the personal sinfulness and the personal insincerity of millions. To hearts once purified from self and touched by the grace of God nothing is dearer than to help earth's immense and trampled multitudes by saving souls for whom Christ died. We have but one life given us, but one second, that is, in God's eternity, but it becomes majestic as part of one great living whole, and every true life is only a true life at all in as far as it is the continuation of the one great life of love, of which the one object was to seek and to save the lost.

F. W. FARRAR, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 113.

REFERENCES: xiii. 5.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 250. xiii. 5, 6. —H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 11; *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 394.

Chap. xiii., vers. 5-7.—"Charity is not easily provoked," etc.

I. LOVE is not easily provoked. This characteristic follows upon "seeketh not her own," and very naturally self-regard is the great secret of easy provocation. It may be hidden self-regard, lurking in the by-ways of the character; the generous and self-denying man is often easily provoked, but it is just because self-love has been driven, it may be, from the citadel, yet is still in possession of the outworks. We are, in

this wreck of our nature, such strange inconsistent compounds, that self may be subdued in one province of our being, while it is reigning with full sway in another—nay, may seem to be deposed and bound, while at the same time and place it is dictating its laws and all but supreme. The very nature of the case compels us to say that wherever there is the habit of sudden provocation there self is as yet unsubdued, and the love which was Christ's is not yet completely established in the character.

II. Love thinketh no evil, or better, imputeth not the evil—viz., the evil intended in the slight or insult at which it refuses to be provoked. This slowness to provocation, like the other qualities of which we have treated, is no mere accident of disposition, no mere insulated excellence; it arises from, and is the natural sequence on, a whole chain of causes, all sprung from the highest fact, the existence and ruling in the heart of that pure self-renouncing love, of which it is one of the signs.

III. Love rejoiceth not over iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth. Her sympathies are with the truth, and by the truth is meant that whole class of words and deeds which is opposed to the former thing in which she rejoiceth not—viz., iniquity: in other words, all those things elsewhere mentioned by the Apostle, as being true, honest, and lovely, and of good report.

IV. The concluding clauses of this description of the attributes of Christian love surpass, by generalising, the rest. "Love endureth all things." This surpasses all the rest, and worthily concludes the goodly catalogue of Love's excellences.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 179.

Chap. xiii., ver. 6.—"Rejoiceth in the Truth."

THE Rejoicing of Charity.

As St. Paul depicts the features and behaviour of his Divine charity, are there not many whose feeling would be, that while beautiful and sublime enough, it could hardly have much to do with joy? She suffereth long, is slow to assert herself, or insist upon her rights, seeketh not her own, refuseth under grievance to be easily provoked, beareth all things, endureth all things. And then in the midst of the Apostle's description of what love does, and how she comports herself, comes the word "rejoiceth." Yes, unloving men may not understand it, unloving men may not credit it, but love is far from being a joyless thing. Great joy-waves visit and sweep it, great joy-swellings rise within it, that are all its own, and which no man knoweth save he in

whose breast it rules; while in the very heart of its painfullest yearnings and solicitudes, and its hardest sacrifices, a secret bliss lies smiling, like green verdure beneath the snow.

I. It is the distinction of St. Paul's charity that its moral sensibilities are too delicate and acute to admit of its rejoicing in aught that covers any iniquity or bears any taint of it, that where others can be satisfied and happy because the injustice of the thing is not apparent to them, does not strike them, discerning it at once, and deeply feeling the injustice, *cannot* be content or pleased. The secret of the difference lies in its superior fineness and purity of nature.

II. But see now, when the Apostle proceeds to exhibit the joy of that love whose withholding from joy has been noted, what do we find him placing over against iniquity as its opposite? We might have expected that it would be rectitude or integrity, instead of which he writes "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." The reference is, of course, to the truth of Christ. That was the truth which absorbed him, the truth that fell from the lips and breathed in the life of Christ; and in it he saw the inspiration and the strength of all goodness, a Divine power for the purification of man and society, the grand instrument of moral quickening and nutrition; he opposed it, in writing, to iniquity, out of the fulness of his persuasion that it was pre-eminently a righteous-making force, mighty above all else to cleanse and rectify. Theology was to Paul the most practical and sweetly useful of sciences—even the science of raising men to truer, purer life, through the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus the Lord. Hence the joy of the love that could not abide iniquity, and mourned over it, must needs be found, his heart told him, in the diffusion of truth.

S. A. TIPPLE, *Sunday Mornings at Norwood*, p. 126.

REFERENCES: xiii. 7.—G. Salmon, *Gnosticism and Agnosticism*, p. 213; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1617; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 513. xiii. 8.—H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. i., p. 123; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 164; G. Dawson, *Sermons on Disputed Points*, p. 152; A. Murray, *The Fruits of the Spirit*, p. 452; xiii. 8-10.—Roberts, *Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 332. xiii. 8-13.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 401.

Chap. xiii., ver. 9.—"For we know in part."

I. "WE know in part." This limitation is imposed upon us briefly. Of all that is, of all that ever we, with our present faculties, feel must be, we can know but a small fraction. Our knowledge is limited in range. And again, our knowledge of

that small fraction of being, which is in any way accessible to us, is bounded and conditioned by our human powers. The universe with which we deal is not only a fragment of the whole, but it is a fragment shaped by the laws of our organisation. Our knowledge is limited in form. And yet once more, of that which man could know, being what he is, if the personal powers of the personal experiences of the race were concentrated in a single representation, what an infinitely small portion is embraced by a single mind! The angel who was seen in Augustine's vision emptying the ocean with a shell, gives no untrue image of the disproportion between the possibilities of humanity and the attainments of individual labour. Our knowledge is limited by the circumstances of life. Although we admit that our knowledge is thus limited, we do not commonly take account of the momentous significance of the fact. Many of us who are ceaselessly busy with our daily occupations do not feel it. Many who have distinctly realised it deliberately put it out of sight. That which we cannot know in the way of earthly knowledge is for us, they say, as if it were not. St. Paul follows a better way. He teaches us to see that these mysteries, and the full sense of limitation which they bring with them, are an important factor in our lives. He rounds off life on this side and on that, not with a sleep, but with the glory of the invisible. And is it not true that we are made stronger as well as humbler by lifting up our eyes to the sky, which opens with immeasurable depths above the earth on which we are set to work?

II. "We know in part." The fullest recognition of this fact is not only helpful but essential for the fulfilment of our several tasks. It needs but little observation to notice how swiftly an exclusive fashion of opinion passes away; how a partial philosophy reigns for a spell as universal, and then is neglected, and then is despised. But the Christian faith is the heir of all. It can welcome a new lesson, and it can shelter one which has grown unpopular. It is hospitable to forces whose claims to supremacy it combats. It draws strength from truths with which its enemies have assailed it. Even when it is impressed most deeply by the spirit of the age, it never lays aside its catholicity.

III. "We know in part." But we advance towards the limits of our attainable knowledge by the help of every fragmentary movement. We look upon the fullest vision of the truth in the combination of parts held separately. "We know

in part," but the practical knowledge is, in its measure, the progressive symbol of the absolute. The Lord's words are in continuous fulfilment, "I have told you all things"; and yet He adds—ought I not to say, and therefore He adds?—"I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

BISHOP WESTCOTT, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, May 12th, 1881.

REFERENCES: xiii. 9.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 136; W. Baxendale, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxii., p. 134. xiii. 9-11.—G. Salmon, *Gnosticism and Agnosticism*, p. 1.

Chap. xiii., ver. 11.—"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

CHRISTIAN Manhood.

I. Consider our love of the pleasures of life. I am willing to allow that there is an innocent love of the world, innocent in itself. God made the world, and has sanctioned the general form of human society, and has given us abundant pleasures in it. I do not say lasting pleasures, but still, while they are present, really pleasures. It is natural that the young should look with hope to the prospect before them. They fancy themselves rising in the world, distinguished, courted, admired, securing influence over others, and rewarded with high station. James and John had such a dream when they besought Christ that they might sit at His side in the most honourable places in His kingdom. Now, such dreams can hardly be called sinful in themselves and without reference to the particular case; for the gifts of wealth, power, and influence, and much more of domestic comfort come from God, and may be religiously improved. But, though not directly censurable, they are childish—childish in a Christian who has infinitely higher views to engross his mind, and as being childish excusable only in the young.

II. But there are other childish views and habits besides which must be put off while we take on ourselves the full profession of a Christian, and these, not so free from guilt as those which have been already noticed; such as the love of display, greediness of the world's praise, and the love of the comforts and luxuries of life. Let us take it for granted, as a truth which cannot be gainsaid, that to break with the world and make religion our first concern, is only to cease to be children; and again, that, in consequence, those Christians who have come to mature years, and yet do not even so much as this, are in the presence of the angels of God an odious and

unnatural spectacle and mockery of Christianity. God knows no variableness, neither shadow of turning; and when we outgrow our childhood, we but approach, however feebly, to His likeness, who has no youth nor age, who has no passions, no hopes, nor fears, but who loves truth, purity, and mercy, and who is supremely blessed, because He is supremely holy.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. i., p. 336.

PRESENT and Future Knowledge.

I. Our present love is exactly the same with our future love, it differs only in degree. But our knowledge here is altogether of a different nature to that which we are to have by-and-by. For now we know nothing. We know things only by their reflection; there is no direct acquaintance with anything; we are not capable of it yet. It is like seeing the object in a mirror. And remember the ancients, having no glass, had only metal, and therefore indistinct mirrors. We see reflections, not realities, and those reflections through the medium in which we look at them, confused, or, as it is in the original, riddled.

II. What are the practical duties which are to grow out of the fact of the decided insufficiency of human knowledge? (1) First let us learn that our province is more with love than with knowledge. Our knowledge is essentially and intentionally limited. It is given to us under a prescribed restriction. But love has no limitation. (2) Seeing that our knowledge is intended to be very small, let us take care that we hold it modestly. For it is not the oneness of knowledge, but the integrity of charity, which is to hold together the Church. Shall we fight over the mirror, when we ought each to be helping the other to be looking into it more closely, and trace the fine lines of truth which God exhibits to eyes that watch? (3) And never let us forget that this imperfection which abases all science, both human and Divine, is part of God's great plan in reference to another world. There every man will know, what the Christian has begun to see a little already, that this world is all a shadow, that what we do not see is the substance, and that all we look upon is a mere shadow of the invisible substances. Begin, as soon as you can to deal with that world as the substance and with this world as the shadow.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 168.

REFERENCES: xiii. 11.—J. Burton, *Christian Life and Truth*, p. 94; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 158; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 250; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 31; *Ibid*, vol. iv., pp. 8, 16.

Chap. xiii., ver. 12.—"Then shall I know even as also I am known."

THE First Five Minutes after Death.

I. At our entrance on another state of existence we shall know what it is to exist under entirely new conditions. What will it be to find ourselves with the old self—divested of that body which has clothed it since its first moment of existence—able to achieve, it may be, so much,—it may be, so little; living on, but under conditions which are so entirely new. This experience alone will add no little to our existing knowledge, and the addition will have been made during the first five minutes after death.

II. And the entrance on the next world must bring with it a knowledge of God such as is quite impossible in this life. His vast, His illimitable life, will present itself to the apprehension of our spirits as a clearly consistent whole—not as a complex problem to be painfully mastered by the efforts of our understandings, but as a present, living, encompassing Being who is inflecting Himself upon the very sight, whether they will it or not, of His adoring creatures. "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty"—they were words of warning as well as words of promise.

III. At our entrance on another world we shall know ourselves as never before. The past will be spread out before it, and we shall take a comprehensive survey of it. One Being there is who knows us now, who knows each of us perfectly, who has always known us. Then, for the first time, we shall know ourselves even as also we are known. We shall not have to await the Judge's sentence; we shall read it at a glance, whatever it be, in this new apprehension of what we are.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1098.

REFERENCES: xiii. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 1002; G. Huntington, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, p. 157; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 98; M. Dix, *Sermons Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 233; Talmage, *Old Wells dug Out*, p. 286; A. Craig, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 221; H. Wonnacott, *Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 238; Tinling, *Ibid.*, vol. xx., p. 392; E. Johnson, *Ibid.*, vol. xxii., p. 124; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., pp. 95, 137; vol. viii., p. 5[illegible]; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 124.

Chap. xiii., ver. 13.—"Faith, hope, charity."

I. THERE are three Christian graces as distinguished from all imperfect and transitory gifts—which shall never pass away, but abide for ever—which, in the perfect state, shall constitute

between them the character of the glorified children of God. These three are faith, hope, and love. But of these three greatest, which no perfection of eternity shall ever supersede or absorb, the greatest is love—not the only enduring one when the others have passed away; that, though high praise, would not be so high as is here intended—but, of the three enduring ones, the greatest, first in comparison, not only with the passing gifts of time, but with the enduring graces of eternity; not only a never-fading flower, as contrasted with all ours which fade, but of the immortal blooms which "flower aloft, shading the fount of life," itself the brightest and the fairest.

II. (1) Faith abides for ever. But how can faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, remain in the very presence of the realities themselves? It is clear that faith cannot be altogether the same as here. But will not entire and unwavering trust in God form a component of the character of the saints in glory? And faith will not be lost in certainty, simply because the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him are not bare facts, but living and unfathomable truths, to exercise all man's renewed powers to all eternity. (2) And, if faith abides, hope abides also. It shall not be lost in joy, just because joy will not be one great pleasure once imparted, but springs ever welling up afresh, pleasures at His right hand for evermore. (3) Love is the greatest by comparison with the others, (*a*) because their chief work was accomplished when the higher state was entered, in which *its* chief work lies; (*b*) because faith and hope are but the conditions of the employment of the glorified, whereas love is the employment itself.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. i., p. 119.

I. FAITH must abide with us always if we are to be blessed creatures. No distinction which belongs to God's Divine order can be abolished. Faith and sight may both be perfected; the invisible things may become more real and certain to us than the things of sense. We may be sure that they are the substances apart from which the others would be mere shadows. Hereafter this world, which has been so full of unfathomed secrets, may disclose them and their deepest signification to the purified searcher. Every sense may put forth its fullest energy. The glorified body may be fit to understand the glorified earth. Faith and sight may be the divinest allies, instead of being, as they so often are with us, murderous antagonists. But neither will usurp the other's place. There will be no confusion in

their functions. Such confusions are the effect of our twilight; they will be scattered in God's perfect day.

II. It is impossible to speak of faith without alluding to hope, seeing that faith is said to be "the substance of things hoped for." What can be the things hoped for of which the Apostle tells us? Are they the same with the glory of which the Prophet Isaiah discourses? If so, consider how far the fruition of such a hope can be said to extinguish it. Is not the hope of the glory of God the hope of that which is infinite, which must be always unfolding itself more to him who is in communion with it, which must therefore be always kindling fresh hope? Hope has faith for its substance, because it has God for its substance, God for its end. That comes from Him, and can only be satisfied in Him. Not, indeed, that because He is the ground and ultimate satisfaction of hope it disdains any inferior objects. All things shine in His light; all things glow with His life. But, for that very reason, the pettiest man, the pettiest insect and reptile, must be beyond the comprehension, not of us, but of saints and angels; they must be ever filled with the hope of apprehending a little more of that Divine secret which God sets before them for their endless inquiry and admiration. Surely it is in this babyhood of an existence that we dream of grasping the waters in the hollow of our hand or of finding the end of the rainbow! When we come to our manhood, and begin to see things as they are, we shall cry out, not with terror or shame or discouragement, but with awe, thanksgiving, hope, "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

III. And thus, I conceive, we arrive naturally and in order at the Apostle's conclusion, "The greatest of these is charity." That must be greatest without which the other two could not be. That must be greatest without which they could have no object. A being who is not perfect charity is no object on which faith can rest. It must always be seeking some other, it must always be flickering and uncertain while it is directed towards him. A being who is not perfect charity is no object for hope. As long as it lasts, it must look some day or another to escape from the atmosphere which surrounds him, into some clearer, warmer region. Therefore, if faith abides, if hope abides, charity must abide. Because that is the fixed eternal substance, they have substance. Because that cannot fail, they are not to fail.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 219.

Chap. xiii., ver. 13.—"The greatest of these is charity"

I. Love is of God's nature—faith and hope are only of God's creation and appointment. God loves, but God neither believes nor hopes.

II. Love being of God's nature, and faith and hope being of God's creation and endowment merely, it follows that charity is the senior of faith and hope.

III. Believing and hoping give no direct affinity to the Divine nature, but love secures real oneness with God.

IV. Love fills a nobler sphere than either faith or hope Faith embraces testimony only, but love embraces the testifier. Hope has regard to the future only, but love has regard to all duration.

V. Love is enforced by the highest examples.

VI. The very spirit of the Christian dispensation is the spirit of love.

VII. The work assigned to Christian charity on earth is the mightiest work. Within the individual it is one important evidence of his salvation.

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 137.

LOVE.

I. Whence hath love its birth? In the infinite love of God, in the essence of God. Faith and hope are towards God. They are graces put into the soul by God, whereby the soul should cling to Him, hold fast by Him, long for Him. But faith and hope can have no likeness in God. They are the virtues of the creature when absent from its Creator, companions of its pilgrim state. In heaven neither angels nor saints hope or believe, but see and know and feel and love. On this ground, then, is charity greater than faith and hope, and any other grace, because it has its source in that which God is. Love contains all virtues; it animates all; but itself is beyond all. For they are concerned with human things and human duties, with the soul itself, or its fellow-men, with deeds which shall cease when our earthly needs and trials and infirmities cease; love bears them up to God, looks out of all to Him, does all to Him, and in all sees Him, soars above all and rests not until she finds her rest in the all-loving bosom of God.

II. Holy men have distinguished four stages of love. (1) The first state of fallen man is to love himself for himself. (2) The second is to love God for the man's own sake. Such is the love

of most who love God at all. (3) The third should love God for His own sake. (4) The last stage is that man should love himself only for the sake of God. In this, as holy men have spoken, the soul, borne out of itself with Divine love, forgetting itself, losing itself in a manner as though it were not, not feeling itself and emptied of itself, "goeth forth wholly unto God and cleaving to God, becometh one spirit with Him." This is life eternal, that God should be all in all, that the creature should be nothing of itself, except the vessel of the life and love of God.

E. B. PUSEY, *Sermons from Advent to Whitsuntide*, vol. ii., p. 41.

CONSIDER:—

I. The specific nature of each of these graces. (1) Faith. (*a*) As to its origin, it is the gift of God; as to its operation, it is the work of the Spirit; as to its object, it fastens upon Christ; as to its exercise, it is the disciple's own act. (*b*) Faith designates the act of a sinful man when he accepts Christ from God on God's own terms. It is the first stone of the building, but it is not the foundation. (2) Hope. It is a light shed down from heaven to cheer a dark and troubled scene. It is like moonlight borrowed from the sun to mitigate the darkness, which it cannot dispel. Hope is the tenant, not of a heart that was never broken, but of a heart that has been broken and healed again. (3) Love. Some fragments of this heavenly thing survive the fall and flourish in our nature. It is beautiful even in ruins. But feeble, changeable, and impure is all the love that is born in us. At the best it expatiates on a low level, and expatiates irregularly, intermittently, even there. The love which is strung in with kindred graces in our text is the work of the Spirit in renewed man.

II. The mutual relations of all. Faith leans on Christ, and hope hangs by faith, and love leans on hope. Love, the beauteous top stone on the house of God, could not maintain its place aloft, unless faith resting directly on the rock were surely laid beneath; but it is not the less true, that both its elevation and its beauty are due to the graces of the Spirit, which are piled, course over course, upon faith.

III. The superior magnitude of love. In two distinct aspects love is the greatest of all the graces: (1) in its work on earth, and (2) in its permanence in heaven.

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: xiii. 13.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. i., p 106; R. W. Church, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 37; E. C. Wickham, *Wellington College Sermons*, p. 42; G. Salmon, *Gnosticism and Agnosticism*, p. 205.—E. B. Pusey, *Parochial Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 41; R. W. Church, *Advent Sermons*, p. 88; E. A. Abbott, *Oxford Sermons*, p. 86; C. C. Bartholomew, *Sermons Chiefly Practical*, p. 39; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 85; L. Campbell, *Some Aspects of the Christian Ideal*, p. 175; T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 342; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 74; R. Tuck, *Ibid.*, vol. xix., p. 346; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 89; vol. viii., pp. 98, 99, 224; W. Dorling, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 61; R. W. Church, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 417. xiii.—H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 148; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 425. xiv. 1.—W. Webb Peploe, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 161; R. Tuck, *Ibid.*, vol. xix., p. 248. xiv. 1-4.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 186. xiv. 2-9.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 355. xiv. 10.—J. Stannard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 91; Morlais Jones, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 172. xiv. 12.—G. W. McCree, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvi., p. 231.

Chap. xiv., ver. 15.—"I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also."

I. CHRISTIAN teaching and Christian prayer and Christian praise are to be intelligible to the people, yea, to the meanest among them. To conduct any of these in a foreign tongue, which the people do not understand, is an absurdity so monstrous that nothing but the fact of its having been done, and now being done in the Church of Rome, could ever reconcile us to the mention of such a thing. For what is prayer? The expression of the heart to God, the breathings of man's inner spirit to the Father of his spirit, the Abba Father of the reconciled and adopted son in God's family. Surely, if anything should be hearty and earnest, this should! Some tell us of holy places on earth, and men have lavished cost to represent by stately form and gorgeous colour and dim religious light the presence of God, and have erected altars before which men should bow in reverence, and shrines which they should pass with soft and trembling steps; but I would have you know but one holy place in this world, and that place is the footstool of the throne of grace, when a Christian's heart is lifted in prayer The liturgy of the sanctuary is the universal utterance of mankind; it speaks in the lisp of infant, in the falter of the aged, in the silent assent when the voice has failed. There the true Cross of Jesus is uplifted before the eye of faith. There is the

mercy seat, and the mild and reconciled presence of Him who once dwelt awful and unapproachable between the cherubim. And there every believer, at every time, has boldness to enter by the blood of Jesus.

II. A distinction must be made between public and private prayer. Men's private prayers represent their individual wants, and are necessarily tinged by their individual constitutions. Not so with the Christian congregation. Public prayer in that expresses the great and invariable cry of human weakness for Divine strength which every believer, at all times, is ready to utter; that constant sacrifice of humble thankfulness for mercies bestowed which, amidst all chances and changes, forms the reality of the Christian's life. It seems to follow, from the very nature of public prayer, that it must consist of set forms of words. The important point is, that our use of those forms should not become a mere formality.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. i., p. 34.

REFERENCES: xiv. 15.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. iv., p. 208; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, p. 115; J. Stalker, *The New Song*, p. 194; R. L. Browne, *Sussex Sermons*, p. 181; H. P. Liddon, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 98; *Ibid.*, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 129. xiv. 20.—J. Oswald Dykes, *Sermons*, p. 51; *Saturday Evening*, p. 187; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 357. xiv. 25.—W. T. Bull, *Ibid.*, vol. xi., p. 332. xiv. 25-43.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 195. xiv. 26.—E. Paxton Hood, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 216; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 258; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 187. xiv. 34.—H. P. Liddon, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 1. xiv. 34, 35.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 289. xv. 1.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 224; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 169.

Chap. xv., vers. 1, 2.

I. "I DECLARE unto you"—I would recall to your remembrance—"the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received." There is an affecting allusion here to past times. There is a touch of tenderness, as the Apostle delicately recalls his own early ministry among the Corinthians and their acceptance of it. There are occasions in Christian experience when such a retrospect may be most seasonable and profitable, when it may be useful to remind Christians of the sort of welcome they were accustomed to give the gospel in days gone by. Surely it is good for us, when our confidence and affection are

beginning to fail, when we are tempted to throw the blame of the failure on the gospel as preached to us in the old fashion and to fancy that it might tell on us more in a new dress, to go back to the old time, and recall our early reception of it in the days of our soul's spiritual birth, our life's morning march when our bosom was young.

II. "I declare unto you the gospel, . . . wherein ye stand"—or have got a standing. It commanded your assent and consent once, your warm embrace and cordial acceptance. And well it might do so; you might well be willing to receive it as you did. For in it you have now got a position which you never otherwise could reach—a position of secure, stable, settled righteousness and peace.

III. By the gospel also "ye are saved." This gospel is indeed the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. All the elements of salvation are provided for us and secured to us in this gospel—free forgiveness, complete acceptance in the sight of God, a sure standing in His favour, a new principle of holy loyalty. Surely, then, it is not a gospel to be lightly abandoned, or superseded, or changed!

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 2.

REFERENCE: xv. 1, 2.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 31.

Chap. xv., vers. 1-4.

PAUL'S Gospel.

I. We have here Paul's gospel in its substance. "How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." (1) The great peculiarity, and the great blessedness and sign of the universal adaptation of Christianity, is, that it tells the story of things that happened on this green solid earth of ours. (2) Paul's gospel fastened, as its central fact, on the death and accompanying burial, and the consequent resurrection, of Jesus Christ. There is the vital centre of the gospel.

II. Note what we learn here of Paul's gospel in its power. He specifies two of its mighty influences upon men—"wherein ye stand," "by which also ye are saved."

III. Note what our text tells us of Paul's gospel in its conditions. (1) There must be a solid faith, not a faith which is lightly and without due cause taken up. (2) The other condition is that continuous grasp of the truth which makes the

essence of the gospel. It is whilst you believe that the gospel is saving you.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, May 27th, 1886.

REFERENCES: xv. 1-4.—C. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, p. 285. xv. 1-11.—*Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 190. xv. 2.—J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 335. xv. 3.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 261; W. J. Knox-Little, *The Mystery of Sorrow*, p. 1. xv. 3, 4.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 105.

Chap. xv., vers. 3-11.

I. THE gospel which Paul preached was very simple. (1) The articles of his creed were few and plain. "Christ died; He was buried; He rose again." (2) He delivered them "first of all." They were among the first things of which he spoke. He put them in the van and forefront of all his teaching. (3) He delivered them as that which he also received. They constituted his message and his mission, both of which came to him directly from the Lord.

II. Having described the gospel which he was accustomed to preach at Corinth, Paul indicates the character in which he preached it. He preached it as an apostle, as one who had actually seen the risen Lord. For it was their having actually seen the Lord after His resurrection that qualified the apostles for declaring that doctrine of the atonement which depends on the truth of it. Hence, Paul reminds the Corinthians how, in delivering to them that which he received concerning the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, it was his practice to appeal to the testimony of the original apostles. It was his practice also to associate himself with them, as competent to bear the same testimony that they bore. He was consequently authorised to preach the same gospel that they preached, and to preach it in the same character in which they preached it—that of an eye-witness of the resurrection of Christ.

III. In what we testify and in what we teach we are all at one. This is the last consideration which Paul urges on behalf of the old doctrine, which some were for improving upon by their innovations. It has, he argues, this great recommendation, that, in declaring it, and in bearing witness to the great fact on which it rests, the apostles of the Lord are united and unanimous. "So we preach, and so ye believed."

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 13.

REFERENCES: xv. 5-8.—J. N. Norton, *The King's Ferry Boat* p. 255. xv. 6.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 191; T. Arnold,

Sermons, vol. v., p. 1. xv. 7.—T. Gasquoine, *Christian World Pulpit* vol. x., p. 20. xv. 9.—G. Dawson, *The Authentic Gospel*, p. 205; H. Wonnacott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 238.

Chap. xv., ver. 10.—"By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain."

SUDDEN Conversions.

The conversion of St. Paul was a wonderful conversion, as our church in one place calls it, because it was so unexpected and (as far as the appearance went) so sudden. It may be useful to mention one or two kinds of what may be called sudden conversions, and to inquire which of them really took place in St. Paul's case.

I. First, some men turn to religion all at once from some sudden impulse of mind, some powerful excitement, or some strong persuasion. Such sudden conversions deceive for a time even the better sort of people.

II. In these cases of sudden conversion, when men change at once either from open sin, or again from the zealous partisanship of a certain creed, to some novel form of faith or worship, their lightmindedness is detected by their frequent changing—their changing again and again, so that one can never be certain of them. This is the test of their unsoundness—having no root in themselves their convictions and earnestness presently wither away. But there is another kind of sudden conversion, in which a man perseveres to the end, consistent in the new form he adopts, and which may be right or wrong, as it happens, but which he cannot be said to recommend or confirm to us by his own change. A man who suddenly professes religion after a profligate life, merely because he is sick of his vices, or tormented by the thought of God's anger, does no honour to religion.

III. When men change their religious opinions really and truly, it is not merely their opinions that they change, but their hearts, and this evidently is not done in a moment—it is a slow work. Nevertheless, though gradual, the change is often not uniform, but proceeds, so to say, by fits and starts, being influenced by external events and other circumstances. There was much in St. Paul's character which was not changed by his conversion, but merely directed to other and higher objects and purified. It was his creed that was changed and his soul by regeneration. That all-pitying, all-holy Eye, which turned in love upon St. Peter when he denied Christ and thereby roused

him to repentance, looked on St. Paul also while he persecuted Him and wrought in him the sudden conversion.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. viii., p. 217.

(See also *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. v., p. 307.)

REFERENCES: xv. 10.—Beecher, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 59; H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. ii., p. 94; A. Blomfield, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 53; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 25; W. Page, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 204; J. A. Carr, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 305; A. K. H. B., *Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*, 3rd series, p. 216. xv. 11.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 185. xv. 12.—H. W. Beecher, *Forty-Eight Sermons*, vol. i., p. 257.

Chap. xv., vers. 12-14.

THE Certainty of the Resurrection Demonstrated.

There are two propositions furnished by the Apostle in our text—each is comprehensive of many truths, and may be divided into more. The first is, that if there be no resurrection from the dead then Christ is not risen—a proposition which assumes or affirms that the resurrection of all men is a necessary consequence of the resurrection of Christ; so that to prove the one is to establish the other. The second, that if Christ be not risen "our preaching is vain and your faith is vain," a proposition which clearly makes Christianity nothing better than a worthless delusion if you take it from the article of the Redeemer's resurrection.

I. Consider first the necessary connection between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of all men. If Christ rose, He rose not as an individual, but as head of the whole race; His was the resurrection of human nature, and therefore must all men eventually rise. If, on the other hand, the dead are to rise, Christ must have risen; they can rise only through human nature having been redeemed from its own dark image by the resurrection of Christ. All would agree in the statement that if men are not to die then is Adam not dead. They are bound by the same reasoning to assent to the proposition of our text, that if there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

II. Consider the indispensableness of the truth of the resurrection to the worth of Christianity. If Christ be not risen, we shall not rise. But if we shall not rise, our nature is still unredeemed, and the Mediator must have failed in the great work which He came to achieve. If Christ have not secured a

resurrection for the body, He cannot have secured eternal happiness for the soul. If He succeeded He threw life into human dust, as well as ransomed the human spirit; if He failed He has as much left the soul in hell as the body in the grave. In pleading for the truth of the resurrection we are pleading for the whole Christian system.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1502.

Chap. xv., vers. 12-17.

THE fact of the resurrection of Christ and the belief in a general resurrection are intimately and inseparably connected. So the Apostle Paul here, as elsewhere, teaches. The resurrection of Christ and the general resurrection are so related to one another that they stand or fall together. If Christ is risen, then the dead rise; if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised.

I. It gives a stern living reality to the statement that Christ died for our sins. He died for our sins in the sense of dying in them, literally and fully in that sense. Our sins were the occasion of His death. They made it necessary. They were the cause of it. He could not have saved us from our sins otherwise than by dying for our sins. Had it been possible for Him to be holden of death, He must have continued to occupy the position and to bear the character of the guilty criminals whom He represented when He died.

II. The burial of Christ, viewed in the light of the Apostle's argument, is a fact of great significance. The agony is past; the curse is borne. But He is not yet freed from His vicarious partnership with us in our sins. His grave is to be with the wicked. The man Christ Jesus, as to His whole manhood, body as well as soul, has not yet got rid of our sins. They are with Him, they are upon Him, He is in them, while He lies, as to His dishonoured body, in that dark and narrow cell.

III. Up to the moment of His resurrection He is bearing our sins. But He is rid of our sins now. And if we are in Him, we are rid of them too, in the very same sense and to the very same extent that He is. There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ. Our faith in Him is not now vain, for He died for our sins and rose again for our justification.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 35.

REFERENCE: xv. 13-20.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 215.

Chap. xv., ver. 14.—"If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

THIS is the Apostle's way of saying, as strongly as he can, that there is no doubt whatever about the fact of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. He tells his readers that Christ is risen, because if He is not risen consequences must follow which he knows they will treat as plainly absurd.

I. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain." "Our preaching." St. Paul associates himself with the older apostles who had seen the Lord Jesus on earth, and especially after His resurrection. He and they alike had been preaching a message to the world which, if Christ had not really risen from His grave, was vain, literally empty—a mere assortment of words and phrases without a soul—a doctrine which, if it could be called a doctrine, was devoid of all that entitled it to command the attention of human beings. The resurrection was the apostles' reason for preaching at all. The resurrection was the main substance of what they taught. If they were deceived as to its reality, their teaching had neither basis nor substance.

II. But the Apostle adds, "If Christ be not risen, your faith is also vain." (1) The most characteristic state in the habitual thought of a Christian is the conviction that, although utterly unworthy, he is a redeemed man. But if Christ be not risen from His grave, where is the justification of this? The resurrection pours a flood of light upon the passion. If Christ be not raised, there is no proof that He who suffered on Calvary was more than the feeble victim of an enormous wrong. (2) A second ruling feature of a Christian's habitual state of mind is that he is constantly looking forward to another life. But if Christ died and did not burst the fetters of death, it is trifling with the hopes and with the anxieties of the soul of man to tell us that He has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, or that He has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. (3) A third feature of the state of mind created in the soul by Christian faith is belief in the possible perfection of man. If Christ be not risen, our faith in the perfection of man must perish irretrievably. (4) A last characteristic of the state of mind produced by Christian faith is confidence in the ultimate victory of good over evil. If Christ be not risen, our faith in the ultimate victory of good is only too surely vain. If Christ be risen indeed, then neither is the apostolic teaching vain, nor is the faith of Christians vain; and, therefore, to the end of time, the apostolic message will sway successive genera-

tions of men with a conviction of its truth and power, and the faith of Christians will be, as it has been, the strength and the consolation of millions as they pass through the world to the life which is beyond the grave.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1092.

REFERENCES: xv. 14.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 378; A. Ainger, *Sermons in the Temple Church*, p. 74; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 185.

Chap. xv., vers. 14, 15.—"And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain," etc.

WHAT Comes of a Dead Christ?

I. The first point the Apostle makes is this: that with the resurrection of Jesus Christ the whole gospel stands or falls.

II. Secondly, with the resurrection of Jesus Christ stands or falls the character of the witnesses.

III. Again, with the resurrection of Jesus Christ stands or falls the faith of the Christian.

IV. Lastly, with the resurrection of Christ stands or falls the heaven of His servants.

A. MACLAREN, *The Unchanging Christ*, p. 136.

Chap. xv., vers. 16, 17.—"If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."

THE Resurrection of Christ.

I. When Christ died, all died. His death was not for Himself, but for mankind. And by all being thus subjected to the punishment of sin in Him the sin of the world was taken away. But it remained that the positive results of redemption should be assured to us. He was delivered for our offences, but, in order to our justification, He must be raised again. His death for sin was the voluntary carrying out to the utmost of His assumption of that whole nature which had incurred death as the penalty of sin. But His resurrection was the sign that that penalty was all paid, and He, our representative, discharged.

II. Now, what have been to us, what to our world, the consequences of this resurrection of our Lord? Let us take them, by reversing the negative process of reasoning, in our text. If Christ be raised, the dead are also raised. We have dwelt much on Him as the head of our race. He, the Head, is raised, and is in glory. By this He has become the firstfruits of them that sleep. As truly as the first ears of the ripened grain are not alone, but are a sample of the innumerable multitude which

are to follow, so truly our risen Saviour is but what His people shall be. Their bodies, like His body, shall pass into death. Their bodies, unlike His body, shall see corruption. But the mighty power of Him, their Head, abiding in and working in them, shall again bring their bodies, but changed and glorified, up out of the dead of the earth, and repossess them with their spirits, and beautify and invigorate them for a blessed eternity.

III. The great doctrine of the resurrection of the body was ever in old times the mark of the Christian creed. Still, it is to be feared, it remains a stumblingblock even now to some Christian minds. An immortality of the spirit they are prepared to grant, but a rising again of the body seems to them a strange and, indeed, a needless thing. Let us remind such persons that the salvation to be wrought for man by Christ must be as entire as that fall into sin, out of which it is to raise him. In that fall the body became an instrument of iniquity; by that salvation it must become an instrument of holiness. That salvation does not free it from death, the consequence of its inherited and actual sin; but it puts the man into communion with that energising Spirit, which shall quicken the whole man —body, soul, and spirit—into glorious and heavenly life.

IV. Our text draws for us another important inference from Christ's resurrection. "If Christ be raised, our faith is not vain; we are not still in our sins." That empty tomb witnesses that we are justified before God. That stone rolled away declares that our redemption is achieved. Now at length is the victory won for man. Now the kingdoms of this world are wrested out of the hand of the prince of this world, and are becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 146.

REFERENCE: xv. 17.—W. J. Woods, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 381.

Chap. xv., ver. 18.—"Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

MORAL Certainty of the True Christian's Resurrection.

I. The Apostle means the words of the text to express what is most shocking and most impossible. If they who had lived all their days in patience and self-denial and love, had done all this for nothing; if they had set their hopes upon a fond dream, purifying their hearts and enkindling their best affections with the thought of Him to whom they were nothing, and who was nothing to them; if the only good men in the world should

prove to have been the only foolish ones, the only ones who had lived in vain—then indeed our language and our very nature seem confounded; it would be well with us if we and all around us were but the creatures of a dream.

II. Many persons lessen by their conduct, both for themselves and others, the argument for belief in the resurrection; they so live that when they are gone, it would not seem in any way monstrous to think that they were perished for ever. By "perished" I mean what the word means in the text—that is, were become as though they had never been born, and were vanished into nothing. But conceive of one who, loving God in Christ, has been chastened by His fatherly hand in a long course of severe suffering. Conceive such a one, so young, so suffering, so sanctified, finding in the very last hour no abatement of pain, but a fearful increase of it; yet while they who stand by were most distressed, the faith and love of the sufferer were never clouded, and the trust in Christ and cheerful submission to His will never for a moment shaken. Conceive this; and shall not heaven and earth pass sooner than that one sleeping in Jesus should not also be raised up by the Spirit of Jesus, and presented by Him before the throne of His Father, to live for ever in the fulness of His blessing?

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 103.

REFERENCES: xv. 18.—E. C. Wickham, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 308.

Chap. xv., vers. 18, 19.

I. "THEN they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." They have perished. This does not mean that upon the supposition made they have ceased to exist. The question of the continued existence of men after death is not raised in the argument. What the Apostle has in his view, as to those which had fallen asleep in Christ, is not their perishing in the sense of ceasing to exist either in the body or out of the body, but their perishing in the sense of not being saved, but lost. Was it a lie that these holy men and women grasped in their right hand when they walked so fearlessly through the valley of the shadow of death? And are their eyes now opened in that other world—to the sad and awful truth—that for all their faith in Christ they are yet in their sins; that they believed in One who died, indeed, for their sins, but is not, to this hour, Himself extricated from them?

II. In truth the innovation involves us all, the dead and the

living, who have believed on Christ in one common ruin: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." In this life we have hope in Christ, and there may be pleasure in such hope in Christ while it lasts. But it is a hope which, if there be, as there assuredly is, a hereafter, will be found to be utterly hollow and untrue. For it is the hope, it is the faith of our being saved from our sins. But we are not saved from our sins if Christ be not raised.

But it is not so. Christ is risen from the dead. He who was dead is alive for evermore. Therefore we, as well as our predecessors in the life of faith, have a hope which neither death nor sin can touch.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 48.

Chap. xv., ver. 19.—"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

WHAT is the exact hope respecting the future that we owe to our risen Lord? Is it the hope that we shall exist for ever? Is our continuous existence hereafter altogether dependent upon faith in communion with the risen Christ? No, this is not what the Apostle meant; our immortality is not a gift of the Redeemer, it is a gift of the Creator; and it is just as much a part of our being as any of the limbs of our body, or as reason, imagination, or any of the natural endowments of our mind.

I. We look forward as reasonable beings to immortality. But to what sort of immortality does this anticipation point? Is it, for instance, (1) the immortality of the race, and does the individual really perish at death? No, it is not this to which we men look forward. A race of beings does not really live apart from the individuals which compose it; only a person, only a feeling, thinking, and resolving centre and seat of life can be properly immortal. (2) Is it, then, an immortality of fame? How many in each generation could hope to share in such an immortality as this? (3) Is it an immortality of good deeds? No; the immortality of our actions is not an immortality which ever can satisfy the heart or the reason of man, since this yearning for immortality is above all things based on a sense of justice.

II. The hope in Christ is the hope of a blessed immortality. This He has won for us by His perfect and sufficient sacrifice on the cross, whereby our sins are blotted out; and His cross and His virtue is proved to us by His resurrection from the dead, that He lives in order that we may live also is the very

basis of our hope in Him. Apart from this conviction, Christianity is indeed a dream; the efforts and sacrifices of Christian life are wasted; we are the victims of vain delusion, and we are of all men most miserable.

H. P. LIDDON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 209.

REFERENCES: xv. 19.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 562; H. P. Liddon, *Easter Sermons*, vol. i., p. 1; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 61; J. Fordyce, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 342; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxii., p. 36; J. G. Rogers, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi., p. 59. xv. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 445; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 131; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 126; J. Kennedy, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 369; J. B. Brown, *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 347; A. Craig, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 197; *Plain Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 118. xv. 20, 21.—G. Huntington, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, p. 99. xv. 21.—E. White, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 185. xv. 21-39.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 223.

Chap. xv., vers. 20-28.—"Now is Christ risen," etc.

I. THE principle upon which the Apostle proceeds is the same when he reasons on the assumption of Christ's resurrection being admitted, as when he argues on the hypothesis of its being denied. That principle is the substantial oneness of Christ and His believing people. Your faith unites you to Christ and identifies you with Him. It commits you to share His fortune. It involves you in His destiny, whatever that may be. Your union with Christ, which would be your destruction if Christ were not risen, now that He is risen is your life and glory. Your union with Christ therefore is the explanation of the connection between His resurrection and yours. You are yourself in Him, and your resurrection, consequently, is also in Him—His resurrection is yours.

II. The two economies, the original and the remedial, the original economy of nature, or a law working death, and the remedial economy of grace, with its resurrection of the dead, have several features in common for those who have experience of both. (1) In both economies there is representation. It is by or through a representative man that death reaches you. It is by or through a representative man that the resurrection of life awaits you. Christ in His resurrection represents you, precisely as Adam, when he incurred death, represented you. (2) In both economies there is union. You are in the man Adam, by whom comes death. You are in the man Christ Jesus, by whom comes the resurrection of the dead. It is as being in Adam by nature that you all die the death which

comes by him, and it is as by life in Christ by grace that you shall all be made alive with the life, the resurrection of the dead, which comes by Him. (3) Subordination. "Every man in his own order." Christ is Himself alone the firstfruits. That is His position, His rank, and His order. Most gladly and cheerfully do we concede it to Him.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 63.

Chap. xv., ver. 22.—"In Christ shall all be made alive."

THE Christian's Life in Christ.

I. "In Christ shall all be made alive." We shall live then, not only as having our souls restored to our bodies, and our souls and bodies living on in the presence of Almighty God; great and unutterable as were this blessedness, there is a higher yet in store, to live on "in Christ." To dwell in God must be by His dwelling in us. He takes us out of our state of nature in which we were, fallen, estranged, in a far country, out of and away from Him, and takes us up into Himself. He cometh to us, and if we will receive Him, He dwelleth in us, and maketh His abode in us. He enlargeth our hearts by His sanctifying Spirit which He giveth us, by the obedience which He enables us to yield, by the acts of faith and love which He strengthens us to do, and then dwelleth in those who are His more largely. By dwelling in us He makes us parts of Himself, so that in the ancient Church they could boldly say, "He deifieth me—that is, He makes me part of Him, of His body, who is God."

II. Whether or no Christ giveth to the faithful soul to feel its own blessedness, or in whatever degree He makes the soul to hunger after Him, and so satisfieth the hungry soul with His own richness, the inward unseen presence of God in the soul is the gift of the gospel. This is its greatest, its one all-containing promise. They who obey the Spirit, who receive the Spirit of God to dwell in them, although in the body, are, St. Paul says, "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit"—they are encompassed, enfolded, enveloped in the Spirit. The Spirit is penetrating the whole man, and so imparting to the whole its own nature. As the iron, when placed in the fire, is no longer dark and heavy-looking and cold, but transparent and glowing and bright and kindled, and gives out light and warmth, and seems of another nature, so the whole soul and body of him who obeyeth the Spirit of God is in a course of change, becoming, as our Lord says, "full of light" and glowing, and on fire with love.

E. B. PUSEY, *Sermons from Advent to Whitsuntide*, vol. i., p. 230

Chap. xv., ver. 24.—"Then cometh the end."

THE Certain End.

It is not possible to rule these words out of life. They are perpetually recurring. You tell of any process, you trace out how it is going to work on from step to step, you see how cause opens into effect, and then effect, becoming cause, opens into still further effect beyond; but always, by-and-by, your thought comes to a stoppage and a change. The process is exhausted. "Then cometh the end." Your story has to round itself to that.

Let us think of this characteristic of life, and see what it means.

I. We may begin by noting this—which is the most striking thing about the whole matter—the way in which men's desire and men's dread are both called out by this constant coming of the ends of things. Look (1) at man's desire of the end. It is, in the most superficial aspect of it, a part of his dread of monotony. There is something very pathetic, it seems to me, in man's instinctive fear of being wearied with even the most delightful and satisfactory of all the experiences which he meets with in the world. Is it not a sign, one of the many signs, of man's sense that his nature is made for larger worlds than this, and only abides here temporarily and in education for destinies which shall be worthy of its capacities? "I would not live alway" has been a true cry of the human soul. (2) But this is the most superficial aspect of it. Very early in every experience there comes the sense of imperfection and failure in what we have already done, and the wish that it were possible to begin the game again. Already there are some things in life which the soul would fain get out of life. The first sketch has so marred the canvas that the perfect picture seems impossible. In many tones, yet all of them tones of satisfaction, men desire the end. (3) Turn now to the other side, and think of the dread with which men think of the coming of ends in life. There is (*a*) the sheer force of habit. It is the inertia of life. That this should cease to be is shocking and surprising. (*b*) Very often one shrinks from the announcement of the coming end of the condition in which he is now living, because, when he hears it, he becomes aware how far he is from having yet exhausted the condition in which he is now living. (*c*) There is the great uncertainty which envelops every experience which is untried.

II. The workman's voice has not to summon out of the east the shadows of the night in which no man can work. God sends it. And, if around the instability of human life is wrapped the great permanence of the life of God, then is there not light upon it all? All satisfaction with the temporariness comes only from its being enfolded and embraced within the eternity of the Eternal. PHILLIPS BROOKS, *The Light of the World*, p. 401.

REFERENCES: xv. 24.—H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *Waterside Mission Sermons*, 2nd series, No. 20. xv. 24-6.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 384.

Chap. xv., vers. 24-8.

I. THERE is a remarkable and significant transaction between the Son and the Eternal Father. "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Plainly, the kingdom here means, not the realms or territories over which kingly authority is exercised, but the kingly authority itself. It is not certain dominions that Christ delivers up, but the right of dominion. And the right of dominion then to be delivered up is evidently that which Christ wields, as having all things put under His feet. It is that by which He puts down all rule and all authority and power. It is His mediatorial sovereignty, His prerogative of supremacy and empire, as Messiah the Prince. But how does He deliver it up to God the Father? What does that imply? Does He so deliver it up that it passes from Him, and He ceases to reign? It can scarcely be that, we answer. Christ comes as His Father's delegate and viceroy to the world, invested with full power and absolute authority over the whole province and all within it. The universal power and authority thus conveyed to Him He is commissioned to use, on the one hand, for attaching all who are to be His adherents to Himself, and, on the other hand, for the overthrow of every hostile force. The war is long, the struggle is severe; but at last it is over. The Captain of salvation has gathered round Him the entire number of the people that are to be saved. His delegated authority He has been wielding on their behalf. He needs to wield it no more. In their name, as well as in His own, "He delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father."

II. Christ and His redeemed occupy the earth for ever. He continues to reign over the seed given to Him and purchased by Him. On earth, as elsewhere, God is all in all.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 77.

REFERENCE: xv. 24-8.—*Homilist*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 92.

Chap. xv., ver. 25.

THE Quantity and Quality of the Evidence for the Resurrection. Look :—

I. At the amount of evidence afforded. St. Paul sums it up (1 Cor. xv. 1-11). Can anything be more conclusive, within the limits which, for the very highest reasons, it seemed important to observe? Here was no tremulous expectation, no eager, excited expectation. The Cross had withered all their hopes. Far from watching for a resurrection, the women took spices to embalm Him. Far from being in a state of mind to invent a resurrection to fulfil their hopes, the apostles were much more in a state to regard the real resurrection as an illusion. But the evidence was simply overwhelming. "He showed Himself alive after His passion" by so many infallible proofs that there was no room for the faintest hesitation. They saw, and inevitably believed. And when demonstration to the most capable judges was complete, He was seen of five hundred brethren at once, and then the fact enshrined itself indisputably in human history. We have no means of sifting the evidence in detail and of examining the witnesses. But there were very powerful political and religious bodies who had the opportunity, and who had, moreover, the deepest interest in proving the resurrection to be an imposture. But it offered evidence which assured its acceptance, and planted it firmly in the deepest convictions of mankind.

II. The quality of the evidence is entirely that of disciples—those who knew the Lord after the flesh, and by whom, when the first incredulous surprise was conquered, the truth was eagerly welcomed and joyfully enshrined in their hearts. It is the evidence of those whose sympathies, affections, and hopes disposed them to believe. I attach the greatest importance to the evidence of the Apostle Paul. We can weigh the objections in the balance of the mind of a man who was a master of arguments, who had the widest learning and the keenest discernment, and who tells us what he thought by living and dying the martyr of the Resurrection. Saul of Tarsus, who knew everything about it, became a convert to the truth of the Resurrection; he lived through a long life of matchless trials and sufferings with one simple object—to preach it; and he lifted up his voice to proclaim his faith in it in the moment when that voice was hushed in death.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 347.

REFERENCES: xv. 25.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 807.

xv. 26.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 721; vol. xxii., No. 1329; R. L. Browne, *Sussex Sermons*, p. 31; S. Minton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 305. xv. 26, 27.—C. W. Furse, *Sermons at Richmond*, p. 72. xv. 27.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol, ii., p. 254.

Chap. xv., ver. 28.—"The Son Himself subject," etc.

Our Relations to Christ in the Future Life.

I. Going forward into the future life, so much appears to be determined, that we shall there know God unalterably and for ever as trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit. The Son, therefore, as discovered in trinity, is of course never to be merged, or passed out of sight, or in such a sense made subject. How, then, shall we understand the Apostle when he testifies that the Son shall be subject or retired from the view? He is speaking plainly of the Son as incarnate, or externalised in the flesh, visible outwardly and in the man form, and known as the Son of Mary. He it is that, after having as a king outwardly regnant put all things under His feet, is in turn to become subject also Himself, that God may be all in all, and the machineries hitherto conspicuous be for ever taken back as before the advent.

II. Trinity then, as Paul conceives, will remain, but the mortal Sonship, the man, will disappear, and be no more visible. And let us not too hastily recoil from this. It may be that we have been promising ourselves a felicity in the future world made up almost wholly of the fact that we shall be with Christ in His humanly personal form, and have used this hope to feed our longings, quite apart from all higher relations to His eternal Sonship. Our relations to Christ in the future life are to be relations to God in Christ and never to the Jesus in Christ. They centre in the triune Deity, and specially in the Eternal Word or Son, who is represented for a time in the person of Jesus. But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part will be taken away. Christ will remain because the Eternal Son is in Him, but the Jesus, the human part, will be made subject, or taken away, because all that He could do for us in the revelation of God is done. Back there under that veil is the Son of Mary, the Child of her manger, the Healer that came about on foot, and slept uncovered by the roads and on the mountains, He that was bowed to suffering, He that could be hated and die—all this He is above, as characterised for us by what He was below, nowise exalted above it, but rather by it, for ever. Gone by as the Jesus, also as the Christ under time, He is yet the Eternal Son for ever Christed by His mortal story; so that we behold Him eternalised as our Christ, and

hear Him saying as it were out of His humanity, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come." It is as if the Christ we loved were visible in all His dear humanities, though Trinity alone is left. H. BUSHNELL, *Sermons on Living Subjects*, p. 442.

REFERENCES: xv. 28.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 182. xv. 29.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vii., p. 278.

Chap. xv., vers. 29-32.—"Baptized for the dead," etc.

I. THE first and chief puzzle of this passage is in the twenty-ninth verse. What is meant by being baptized for the dead? The meaning which most commends itself at least to the fancy and the heart is the one which, retaining the idea of substitution, makes it not a vicarious representation of the persons of the dead, but as it were the vicarious occupancy of the position which till death they filled. The vacancies left in the ranks of the Christian army when saints and martyrs fall asleep in Jesus are supplied by fresh recruits, eager to be baptized as they were and pledged by baptism to fall as they fell, at the post of duty and danger.

II. The Apostle points to the dangers which always and everywhere beset believers as thus baptized for the dead, and most emphatically describes his own condition as being one not merely of continual exposure to death, but of the continual endurance of death. It is singularly strong language that he uses. Where, he says, if the dead rise not, is that rejoicing of yours which I have, which is my joy in our Lord Jesus Christ? Wherefore, if the dead rise not, should I for so vain a dream of bliss be doomed to die daily?

III. And if, says Paul, your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus and which reconciles me to my dying daily—if that does not move you, what do you say to my actual, outward estate here in Ephesus, whence I am now writing to you? Speaking to you as men are wont to speak to one another of their trials, I tell you that here in Ephesus it has seemed to me as if it were rather with wild beasts than with human beings that I had to contend. Why provoke the resentment of wild beasts at Ephesus, if, after all, there is no resurrection of the dead?

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 91.

REFERENCES: xv. 31.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 828; H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *Sunday Sermonettes for a Year*, p. 174; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ix., p. 334. xv. 32.—*Ibid.*, 3rd series, vol. vii., p. 339; C. S. Robinson, *Sermons on Neglected Texts*, p. 268. xv. 33.—G. Litting, *Thirty Children's Sermons*, p. 85; W. Braden, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 52.

Chap. xv., vers. 33, 34.

I. We sometimes feel a difficulty in understanding why Paul should be so very earnest in insisting on the resurrection of the body. It seems as if he thought that without that element the belief of immortality might not only fail to exercise a good influence, but might even exercise an evil influence over one who so embraces it. The favourite doctrine of the gnostics that matter is in itself essentially and incurably corrupt, and is the cause of all corruption, compelled them to deny the possibility of a literal bodily resurrection. From this theory of theirs two practical conclusions flowed. It led them to throw the entire blame of whatever evil still adhered to them not on the renewed and risen soul, but on that dead and defiled body which would not let the soul purely and freely live. And worse than that, it led them to argue that the amount of evil, more or less, which might still adhere to them, was really very much matter of indifference. Since being all centred in the body, it would all be got rid of when the body was cast aside. Thus by brief stages their error led to sin. Well might the Apostle write the solemn warning, "Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners"!

II. The Apostle is here thinking of that deeper and wider view which he has been taking as to the bearing of the denial of the resurrection on the entire scheme of the gospel as a provision of life and salvation for the lost and guilty children of men. If Christ is not risen bodily, then all proof is wanting of His emancipation, and ours in Him from the penalty of sin. All proof is wanting of His righteous justification for us and our righteous justification in Him.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 109.

Chap. xv., ver. 34.—"For some have not the knowledge of God."

WHO then are these Corinthian disciples, that they have not so much as the knowledge of God? Plainly enough our Apostle is not charging them here with ignorance, but with some lack of the Divine illumination which ought, if they are true disciples, to be in them. They certainly know God in the traditional and merely cognitive way.

I. We shall best understand the point assumed in this impeachment if we raise the distinction between knowing God and knowing about God. Doubtless it is much to know about God—about His operations, His works, His plans, His laws, His truth, His perfect attributes, His saving mercies. This kind

of knowledge is presupposed in all faith, and constitutes the rational ground of faith, and so far is necessary even to salvation. But true faith itself discovers another and more absolute kind of knowledge—a knowledge of God Himself; immediate, personal knowledge, coming out of no report or statement, or anything called truth, as being taught in language. It is knowing God within, even as we know ourselves.

II. We have every one two kinds of knowledge relating to ourselves. One is what we know mediately about ourselves, through language, and one that which we have immediately as being conscious of ourselves. Under the first we learn who our parents were and what others think of us, what effects the world has on us, what power we have over it, and what is thought to be the science, it may be, of our nature as an intelligent being. Under the second we have a knowledge of ourselves so immediate, that there is no language in it, no thought, no act of judgment or opinion; we simply have a self-feeling that is intuitive and direct. Now, we were made to have first such an immediate knowledge of God as of ourselves, to be conscious of God, only this consciousness of God has been closed up by our sin, and is now set open by our faith; and this exactly is what distinguishes every soul enlightened by the Spirit and born of God.

III. But there is an objection to this mode of conceiving holy experience as implying an immediate discovery of God. What is the use, in this view, some will ask, of a Bible or external revelation? what use of the incarnation itself? Are not these advances on our outward knowledge superseded and made useless when we conceive that God is offered to immediate knowledge and experience? In one view they are, and in another they are not. Does it follow that, because we have an immediate knowledge of heat, we have therefore no use at all for the scientific doctrine of heat, or the laws by which it is expounded? Suppose it is a part of our interest in this article of heat that we be able to generate more of it, or use it differently and with better economy. So far we have a use in knowing about heat, as well as in knowing heat. In the same way it is of immense consequence to know everything possible about God, that we may find out the more perfectly how to know God. H. BUSHNELL, *Sermons on Living Subjects*, p. 114.

REFERENCES: xv. 34.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 81. xv. 35.—*Ibid.*, 3rd series, vol. i., p. 28; W. J. Woods, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 398; W. J. Keay, *Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 213.

Chap. xv., vers. 35-8.

I. Death, dissolution, decay, decomposition—whichever may be the body subjected to that process—is not only no obstacle in the way of that body living again, but affords a presumption that if it is to live again at all, it may be to live in a superior condition; it may be to live possessed of a new nature, a new organisation, adapted to the new sphere into which it is to be introduced. In the case of the seed the bare grain is cast into the ground to die, the resurrection is to a new life, to a life altogether new and fresh. The dead seed is quickened into a new life. So if the body is to exist again, it may be under a new law of life. Death is not the destruction, but the quickening of it.

II. The body which you are to receive in the resurrection may differ from that which you have now—very much as what springs out of the ground and presents itself to view in late autumn in the shape of a luxuriant shock of corn, differs from the bare seed dropped into the ploughed earth in spring. The body that now is and the body that is to be are not to be exactly the same.

III. Still, there is real identity. "To every seed his own body." It is to be such a body as God may be pleased to give, but still it is to be its own body. It is to be a body which the individual himself and all who knew him may and must recognise as his own. It may be changed from what it was when the tomb received it—weak, wasted, worn. It may wear the bloom of summer life, instead of the cold bleak deadness of the bare grain. It will not, however, be so changed but that the instinct of conscience will feel it to be the body in which the deeds of this life were done

R. S. Candlish, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 134.

The Analogy of Nature.

This is St. Paul's answer to objections against the resurrection of the body. The objector took his stand upon supposed impossibilities. "How are the dead raised up?" (as if death were extinction) "and with what body do they come?" (as if corruption were annihilation). St. Paul's answer is drawn, not from faith, but from nature. "Death," he says, "is a condition of life. Death does not extinguish the seed; it must die before it can be quickened, and 'thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain.'" The change or corruption of the seed is

not annihilation, but the germination of a new form, a more perfect structure, the blade, the stalk, and the ear. Nature refutes your fancied impossibility by her perpetual facts. The resurrection is before your eyes. You believe it already. Nature has her resurrection as well as grace; both are kingdoms of God, and His omnipotence is in both alike. There is a relation of virtue and power, as between seed and fruit; so between the body sown and the body that shall be raised from the dead. We shall consider, not the particular subject of St. Paul's controversy, the resurrection of the body, but the form of his argument, which we are wont to call the analogy of nature. It is of great moment that we should well understand its use; for no argument is so strong within its sphere, and none more fatal if pressed too far. Within its legitimate range it makes nature divine; when pushed beyond it reduces faith to a natural religion. Let us see, then, how far it is good, and when it becomes bad.

I. The argument from analogy is good and unanswerable. (1) First, when it is used, as by St. Paul in this place, to refute objections. It is plainly absurd to argue against revelation, or any specific doctrines of revelation, on the ground of difficulties and supposed impossibilities the like of which may be found already to exist in the acknowledged facts of nature. (2) The argument from analogy may be used to some extent affirmatively also. What was simple refutation becomes a presumptive proof. We may now say, "You cannot deny these facts in nature; you acknowledge that nature is from God; the faith is so far a counterpart of nature, bears the same features, the tokens of one and the same hand: how can you deny that the faith too is from God?" This is not offered as a positive or constructive proof. It is a strong presumption, a high probability, but revelation awaits its own proper evidence. It does but reduce the assailant to his defence, and throws the burden upon the objector.

II. This analogical way of reasoning may be bad and destructive. (1) It would be mere infidelity to take the analogy of nature as the measure or limit of revelation. For this, in fact, has been the normal argument of freethinkers. In truth, as has been said by a great master of analogy, we can be no judges of the wisdom of God in the order we find established in the world; and nothing but the knowledge of another world, to which we might compare it, would give the criterion for such a judgment. Let us, then, while we trace the unity and

harmony of all God's works, both in nature and in grace, beware how we limit the manifold fulness of Divine procedure.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 152.

REFERENCES: xv. 35-8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 306; *Homilist*, 1st series, vol. vi., p. 328. xv. 35-45.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 232. xv. 36, 37.—H. P. Liddon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiii., p. 241. xv. 37, 38.—G. Dawson, *The Authentic Gospel*, p. 308. xv. 38.—H. Batchelor, *The Incarnation of God*, p. 101; C. S. Brooks, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 161; H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *The Children's Bread*, p. 88.

Chap. xv., vers. 39-42.

PURSUING the line of thought indicated in the previous verses with reference to the question "How are the dead raised up?" the Apostle may be supposed to ask, "Is not the question answered now? If not, there are still three other facts, or analogies founded on facts, which may reconcile you to the idea of the dead rising again, with bodies substantially the same, and yet with such difference as God may see fit to make."

I. Bodies on earth differ from each other as to the kind of flesh they possess. If God can form here, on the earth, so many different sorts of body, all of flesh, but of flesh all but indefinitely and endlessly diversified; how should it be thought a thing incredible that He should provide for His risen saints bodies suited to their new condition?

II. Heavenly bodies differ from earthly. God gives to the multitudinous stars bodies as it hath pleased Him; and can He not find bodies for the saints to be raised up in? Can He not find for them bodies so much better than those they have now, as the flesh of men is better than the flesh of beasts, fishes, birds? Can He not find for them bodies differing from their present ones, as the glory of celestial bodies in the firmament above differs from the glory of terrestrial here below?

III. Among the heavenly bodies themselves there is diversity. The Creator's power for dealing with matter so as to fit it for mind at any stage of advancement is not to be measured merely by the forms and fancies our flesh takes on earth. The heavenly orbs move freely, and among them there is gradation. Matter is capable of indefinite elevation through the several kinds of earthly flesh and the gradations of glory in the heavenly bodies; why may it not rise higher still?

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 147.

Chap. xv., ver. 41.—"There is one glory of the sun," etc.

This is part of St. Paul's great argument for immortality. The reasoning is quite clear. He speaks of the splendour of heavenly things. He has been claiming man's resurrection on the strength of Christ's resurrection. Christ has risen and entered into His glory; man, because he is one in human nature with Christ, must rise.

I. St. Paul bases the argument for immortality on the richness and splendour of this mortal life. Because this world is so great and beautiful, therefore there must be another greater and still more beautiful. St. Paul makes heaven not a compensation, but a development. His doctrine seems to teach that immortality is not a truth to be distinctly striven for as an end, but a truth which will hold itself around the man who deeply realises the meaning of life, the man who realises living, how identity and variety blend and unite to make the richness and solemnity of living. To quicken identity with variety, to steady variety with identity, is to make a man always keep himself and yet always feel the power of new conditions around him.

II. Consider the consequences of this truth of identity and variety. (1) It will produce self-respect. If you can only know two things—first, that you are a different creature from any that the world has ever seen since Adam, and, secondly, that you are a branch of the tree of life from which sprang Isaiah and St. John—there must come self-respect from both these truths when they are really wrought and kneaded into the substance of the human nature. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars." There is the ground of self-respect. (2) Then see how inevitably respect for others is bound up in such self-respect as this. The absorbing character of great enthusiasm is a matter of the commonest observation. He who cares very earnestly for anything is apt to care very little for other things, and to be indignant that other people do not care as much as he does for the thing he cares for. But surely it must be possible for men to be profoundly devoted to their own work and yet profoundly thankful for the work which other men are doing, work which they cannot do, and whose details and methods it is not in their nature to understand! "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." That every thing should reach its best, that every man should do his best in his own place, in his own line, that every star should shine brightly in its own

sphere, comes to be the wish and prayer and purpose of my life. (3) To Paul this truth was a proof of immortality. We want the life of earth now, the life of heaven by-and-by, and all clear with its own glory, and our humanity capable of them both, capable of sharp timely duty here and now, capable also of the supernal, transcendal splendour of the invisible world when the time shall come: the glory of the star first, the glory of the sun at last.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *The Light of the World*, p. 63.

REFERENCE: xv. 41, 42.—J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, 2nd series, p. 284.

Chap. xv., vers. 42-4.—"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory," etc.

I. THIS body of ours is a body that, whenever and however sown, is sown in corruption, in dishonour, and in weakness. These are the three capital faults of our present mortal bodies. And the three faults are intimately connected and mutually related. They grow into one another; they flow from one another; first corruption, then dishonour, lastly weakness. (1) Corruption is liability to dissolution and decay. The body that is to be sown in corruption is a body capable, or susceptible, of decomposition. It may be broken up. And when it is broken up, its fragments, or fragmentary remains, may be resolved into the constituent elements, or component particles, of which they consist. (2) But dishonour also belongs to what is sown: to the bare grain, to the mortal frame. Under the rich and rare clothing of joyous health, of radiant and smiling bloom, we watch the slow and secret gnawing of the insidious element of corruption that is too surely to undermine it all. The honour that is so perishable is scarcely honour at all. (3) As corruptibility implies dishonour, so it occasions, or causes, weakness. It paralyses physical strength. It paralyses both strength of endurance and strength for action and performance.

II. None of these defects will be found in the resurrection body. That body is incorruptible, indestructible, a meet companion for the immaterial and immortal soul. It is to be no clog or restraint, through its impotency, on the free soul; but apt and able, as its minister, strong to do its pleasure.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 159.

REFERENCE: xv. 43.—F. Basset, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol viii., p. 238.

Chap. xv., ver. 44.—"There is a spiritual body."

We dare not even imagine the full meaning of this phrase—a spiritual body. But there are three ideas with regard to it which we may venture to indicate. We hint at three of its probable characteristics.

I. In the first place, it takes the impress or stamp of the higher spiritual principle of Divine intelligence, or intelligence divinely enlightened and inspired, as easily and spontaneously—as much in the way of its being a matter of course—as naturally, in short, as the present body assumes the character, attitude, and expression of the lower principle of mere animal life—of animal feeling and emotion. It is as good an index of what is spiritual, as the present body is of what is animal in man.

II. The body is an inlet, as well as an outlet. It is the index or image of what is within. But it is also an avenue inwards for things without. It takes the stamp or impress of the inner life, whatever that may be, for which it is adapted. It takes the stamp and impress also of the outer world, and conveys that stamp and impress of the outer world to the living principle, the master that it serves. The spiritual body will be true and faithful as the spirit's minister; and it will be apt and able too. It will lay the entire universe of God under contribution, not at all, in any sense or in any measure, to the lower principle of animal life and feeling, but wholly and exclusively to the higher principle of pure intelligence and Divine thought.

III. The body is an instrument by which the spirit works. The spiritual body will be sleepless, unfatigued, needing neither food nor rest, made like with the angels. How may the redeemed in glory, with those glorious spiritual bodies of theirs, be ever plying the glad and busy task of acting out the impulses of their own spiritual nature, and doing the pleasure of the Lord that bought them!

R. S. Candlish, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 170.

References: xv. 44.—F. W. Aveling, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 120. xv. 45.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 362.

Chap. xv., vers. 45-9.

The two bodies, the natural and the spiritual, are connected with the first Adam and the second Adam respectively. That is the teaching of these verses. The Apostle is anxious to strengthen in the minds of those to whom he is reasoning the conviction that there is a spiritual body as well as a natural body.

I. "The first man Adam was made a living soul." The statement of the Apostle is a quotation from Gen. ii. 7. Had Adam not fallen, it might have been said of him that he became, not a living soul, but a living spirit; his material frame being now accommodated and assimilated, not to the lower "soulish" principle of the animal life, but to the higher principle of life, spiritual and Divine. Even in that case, however, he could not be said to become a life-giving or quickening spirit. That honour belongs to the second Adam alone. At the best, the first Adam would only have been a receiver of the new spirituality, or spiritual vitality, in his body, which was to supersede and displace its original merely animal vitality. It would have been to him personally a gift of grace. It was not his to give to his posterity.

II. "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Where, and how? At his resurrection, and by His resurrection. It cannot be His incarnation that is here referred to. He was then made, He then became—in the first Adam, and as the seed of the woman in the first Adam—simply a living soul. As a quickening spirit, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, dying for us and rising again, quickens spiritually our whole human nature in all its parts. There must, therefore, be a spiritual body. It is no devout imagination to speak of such a thing. Nay more, the Apostle apparently looks upon the spiritual body as the fitting sequel and, as it were, complement of the natural.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 190.

Chap. xv., ver. 46.—"That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."

CONSIDER:—

I. The dispensations of revealed religion. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The gospel is more excellent than the law. The law was the shadow; the gospel is the substance. The law was bondage; the gospel is liberty. That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural. First the law, and then the gospel—first Moses, then Christ—first thunder, earthquake, terror; then love.

II. In the second place, the upward progress is seen in Christian experience and the development of Christian character. The history of any thoughtful Christian soul, from the cradle to the grave, would manifest this.

III. This upward progress is seen in the increase of the spiritual kingdom in the world. The progress is not rapid. But let the Church of God calm her heart. Let us learn to wait and work. "He that believeth shall not make haste."

T. JONES, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 659.

REFERENCE: xv. 46-58.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 239.

Chap. xv., ver. 47.—"The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven."

GOD always looks upon men as placed under some federal or representative head. There is no doubt it is so in a degree now in every family: God deals with the family through the father, and according to the character of the father. But the principle is true on a much larger scale. Adam was not a mere man; he was the representative head of the whole human race. Had he stood, all would have stood; when he fell, all fell.

I. It surely ought to take away every fear that any child of God may have about the Second Advent, to know that He who shall sit upon the throne of glory will be the second Man. There, though perfect and glorified, He will still be in all things just like unto us; only not like what we now are, like we shall become at that moment. As He stooped to man when He was upon earth, He will stoop then; the look with which He looked on John, the accent with which He spoke to many, will be the look and the accent of the King of kings. The body will be distinguishable, but perfect; though with some process that we cannot follow, it will be all spiritual; and there will be seen there, just as when Thomas saw, the very marks of His wounds. To these wounds every sinner shall turn and say, "I plead those wounds"; and with the light which encircles that head with many crowns He will look and say, "For me Thou didst thus rise; for me Thou didst put on this glory; for me Thou art radiant with that dignity."

II. The humanity of the second Man is ours. We are in it, we shall be like it; just as the first man was of the earth, earthy, that we might be earthy, the second Man is the Lord from heaven, that we may be heavenly.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 263.

WE are tempted to ask in what sense our Lord could be called the *second* Man, whereas there were so many millions of men intervening between Him and the common ancestor Adam. The answer is, in brief, that the others were mere copies of the

first—differing, indeed, in detail of character and nature, but fundamentally the same, and presenting the same radical defects; whereas Christ introduced a new kind of man, not after the pattern of Adam, and became the head of a new family of man. Thus Adam and Christ, dividing all human life between them, are rightly called the first and second man respectively. Let us look into this more closely, and first inquire into the differences between Adam and Christ. Now, these differences are two—difference of origin and difference of nature.

I. Of origin. "The first man is of the earth, earthy." Whatever may be said, and truly said, of the Divine and unearthly parentage of Adam, it is nevertheless true that, according to his physical nature, he and his belong essentially to this earth. The second man was the Lord from heaven. His origin was as distinctly Divine and heavenly as Adam's origin was earthy. He stepped down into the ranks of created life; He assumed that humanity which was perhaps on its physical side developed from the very lowest form of existence; but He Himself, in His true, unaltered personality, was the Lord and ruler of the universe, whose dwelling-place is in heaven.

II. This was the difference of origin, and there was a second—of nature and character. Not only does every single child that grows up afford a fresh example of the tendency to do wrong, but it is more and more a principle of science to assert the hereditary character of all such tendencies. If the instinct by which the young bird feeds itself be the experience of its remote ancestors, transmitted to it by hereditary descent, how much more readily shall we believe that the moral evil which began in Adam has become an inseparable characteristic of his race! But Christ was not sinful, and the consequence of His holiness, so peculiar to Himself among the children of men, was that death and the grave had no claim upon Him. He tasted death for every man else, but not for Himself. Adam and Christ divide mankind between them, not only as the two types, but as the two authors of all human life. We have life from God by both of these—indirectly, through Adam, and from him polluted and mortal; directly, through Christ, and from Him pure and immortal; both live on in us, the first man and the second Man.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 306.

REFERENCES: xv. 48.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 341. xv. 49.—E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 12; M. Dix, *Sermons Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 298; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 188. xv. 50.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ix., p. 334.

Chap. xv., vers. 50-58.

THE two main propositions contained in this verse are the following—the first, Flesh and blood is corruption; the second, The kingdom of God is incorruption.

I. Flesh and blood is corruption. To say that bodies corrupted by sin, or by the fall, cannot enter heaven would be simply an irrelevant truism, and would be held to be so by the parties with whom Paul is dealing. It is the admission, or the assertion, that flesh and blood, even in its best state, is corruption, and cannot therefore inherit incorruption; which alone meets their view fairly, and lays the foundation for the inference or conclusion that what is composed of flesh and blood must be changed into something better. The corruption, then, here spoken of is not an evil quality or effect superinduced on the bodily frame by sin; it is the essential property of flesh and blood, as originally made. (1) The body necessarily limits and renders fragmentary any knowledge of the Godhead. (2) It is the antagonist of the Divine life in us; we have to wrestle against it. (3) It has become mortal. On account of sin it is doomed to die. Remaining on the earth unchanged, flesh and blood is sure to die. The sentence on guilty man, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," takes full and universal effect. "His breath goeth forth; he returneth to his earth."

II. The kingdom of God is incorruption. It is a state or condition of things in which there is nothing perishable, no corruption. What it is positively is not here said. The kingdom of God, the heavenly world—in a word, heaven—is not here described. The elements which enter into its pure and holy joy are not specified. But it is identified with incorruption. (1) Death is out of the question, and hence there can be no room or occasion for such arrangements as are here necessary to stave off death. (2) In the kingdom of God there can be nothing to intercept or obscure the beatific heavenly blessedness of the pure in heart.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 206.

REFERENCE: xv. 50-58.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 346.

Chap. xv., ver. 51.—"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

THE Commemoration of the Faithful Departed.

I. The early Church commemorated the dead, (1) out of love to them and to their image. She could no longer behold them and break bread with them; but she could prolong their presence by the vivid recollection of their beloved image, and by the

consciousness of a united adoration; she knew that while she tarried praying without, they were but within the precinct of an inner court, nearer to the eternal throne. (2) And next, she commemorated them in faith to keep up the conscious unity of the Church. They were not severed, but only out of sight. The communion of saints was still one. Nothing was changed but the relation of sight, as when the head of a far-stretching procession, winding through a broken, hollow land, hides itself in some bending vale; it is still all one, all advancing together; they that are farthest onward in the way are conscious of their lengthened following; they that linger with the last are drawn forward, as it were, by the attraction of the advancing multitude. Even so they knew themselves to be ever moving on; they were ever pressing on beyond the bounds of this material world. (3) Again, they commemorated their sleeping brethren in faith, that they might give God the glory of their salvation from this evil world. In the commemoration of the saints they showed forth the manifold grace of Christ, and the manifold fruits of His mysterious passion; and thus, while they lovingly cherished their memories, they also and above all glorified the King's saints.

II. Consider, next, of what especial moment is this affectionate remembrance of saints in feasts and eucharists in the Church of these latter times. (1) First of all, it is a witness against what I may call the Sadduceeism of Christianity. Most earthly are the images of the sleeping saints, even in better minds; as for the rest of men, they soon forget them. When they have buried their dead out of their sight, the unseen world closes up with the mouth of the grave, and they turn back to their homes and muse in sadness how they may begin to weave the same web over again, and make a new cast for happiness and begin life afresh. And why is all this? What should put so unnatural a face upon the very instincts of the heart but the cold tradition of a Christian Sadduceeism? Against this, then, the commemoration of the Church is a direct and wholesome witness. (2) Another most excellent benefit of this commemoration is its tendency to heal the schisms of the visible Church. In all the contests of the Church on earth all her members, be they never so much divided (so that it be not by heresy or schism), still hold communion with the court of heaven. They all find the common head in the King, and a common fellowship in the communion of saints. And as the saints of Christendom are the hallowed bond even of divided churches, so is the hallowed

ancestry of each particular church a bond of unity with its several members.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 320.

REFERENCES: xv. 51.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 94; Todd, *Lectures to Children*, p. 222; H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *Sunday Sermonettes for a Year*, p. 186; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 86. xv. 51, 52.—J. Edmunds, *Sermons in a Village Church*, p. 111. xv. 52, 53.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. ix., p. 205. xv. 53.—J. Taylor, *Saturday Evening*, p. 333.

Chap. xv., vers. 53, 54.

WHAT the change is to be of which the Apostle speaks, and how it is to be effected, it is needless to inquire particularly. It may be more profitable to notice some lessons which it suggests.

I. By an irresistible argument, *a fortiori* it bars the door against whatever is unholy, impure, sensual, or vile. If even physical corruptibility is inadmissible there, what shall we say of moral defilement? Is the body better than the spirit? If we cannot pass into these realms of light and glory with a body corruptible and mortal, how can we reach them with mind, heart, and soul polluted and unclean?

II. How high and holy is that fellowship with Christ into which we are brought as members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones! He took our natural body, corruptible and mortal, that we might take His spiritual body, incorruptible, immortal. In respect of our corporeal as well as our spiritual nature, we are married, we are united to Christ.

III. What a motive have we in this to be spiritually-minded and heavenly-minded; and to be so more and more as our union to Christ grows closer and the time of our being glorified with Him draws nearer. Surely the things which should chiefly engage my mind and interest my heart, in the view of what I am then to be and where I am to be, are the pursuits for which my risen body in that heavenly world will be adapted, rather than those for which my natural body here on earth is fitted! Surely I may be expected to give myself to the acquiring of those tastes and habits that will be found to be congenial when I am raised in Christ incorruptible in body as well as in spirit, to be with Him in glory for ever!

IV. Finally, what a reason is there, in this high hope, for patient waiting all the days of our appointed time, till our change come!—"This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 229.

Chap. xv., ver. 54.—"Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

I. DEATH in this world is the great devourer. He swallows up all living things. Power has no weapon to resist his onset. Worth has no protection against his rancour, nor wisdom against his rules. None are humble enough to be overlooked and pitied. None are good enough to be reverenced and spared. None are high enough to have the right to bid him stand at bay. The king of terrors, formidable to all, is himself afraid of none. He seizes and swallows up the whole family of man. But the destroyer will himself be destroyed.

II. "Death is swallowed up in victory." It is victory that swallows up death. This is the second idea suggested by the oracle. And it admits of being subdivided into two. In the first place, death is swallowed up, or destroyed—victoriously, triumphantly, finally and for ever. In the second place, death is swallowed up and destroyed, merged and lost, in victory. In either view, victory is on the field, determining, on the one hand, the manner of death's destruction, and on the other hand, the fruit of it. In the first place, death is swallowed up or destroyed in victory; victoriously, in the open field, in open fight and triumph. It is by open conquest that death's ruin is effected, and not by stealth and stratagem. The victory in which death is swallowed up the Apostle has already described in a previous part of the chapter. It is the restitution of all things. It is the glorious advent of the Lord. He returns in triumph to this earth which was the scene of His suffering and shame. And at His bright appearing His saints start forth in immortal beauty from their tombs, and a renovated world rejoices in the endless life, the unchanging and unclouded sunshine of paradise at last restored.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 248.

REFERENCE: xv. 55.—Todd, *Lectures to Children*, p. 99.

Chap. xv., vers. 55, 56.

THE Triumph over Death.

I. The most remarkable feature of the triumph over death is the acknowledgment of death's victory and of the manner of it. The triumph is thus seen to be a triumph of a humbling and mortifying character. The triumphal song is chiefly occupied with a recognition of death's unworthy conquest, now happily and gloriously reversed. A sting and a victory belonged to him once, but where are they now? Death, then, has a victory.

He is a conqueror, the conqueror. All other conquerors yield to him; he yields to none. He lends his aid to other conquerors. By means of him and his instruments of destruction, they succeed. But whatever else they may conquer, they cannot conquer him. He, on the contrary, vanquishes them. Neither science nor power, neither arts nor arms, can vanquish him. The traces of his victory are everywhere. It is such a victory as a sting might be expected to win. For surely a sting is a vile sort of weapon, and any victory achieved by it must be vile.

II. Death is the humiliation of man. Sin is his sting. He comes to conquer, introduced by sin. Sin treacherously throws open the gates, and allows him entrance into the city. And entering, he compels the traitor to become his tool. Sin is his weapon as well as his warrant. Literally and emphatically the sting of death is sin.

III. But victory is ours. It is a victory that is ever brightening as we press on in our Christian course and calling. The security of it is ever more and more distinctly seen. The peace of it is ever more and more deeply felt. The high hope which it animates is ever more and more eagerly grasping the fulness of its eternal heavenly joy.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 266.

REFERENCES: xv. 56.—J. M. Gibson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 56. xv. 56, 57.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 23; F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 212; *Homilist*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 98.

Chap. xv., ver. 57.—"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

ST. PAUL speaks in this chapter as if the resurrection of Christ were the victory over the grave. Was it impossible then, for men, before the resurrection of Christ, to look beyond the grave?

I. The apostles unquestionably speak of our Lord's resurrection as an unprecedented fact in the world's history. But they say that its importance to human beings lay in this, that it declared Jesus to be the Son of God with power. It was an act retrospective and prospective. It revealed the Head of the human race. It revealed the relation of the human race, in the person of its Head, to the Father of all. That which was manifested to be true, when He who had taken on Him our nature, and had died as we die, rose out of death because He could not possibly be holden of it, had been true always. Those who

believed in Christ could not doubt that man was to learn his condition from Christ, that he could learn it only from Christ. The evidence for the resurrection lay in all the history, in all the experiences and life of men, up to that hour. Fishermen and tent-makers could not establish it. If there was such a Person, such a Head of man, such a Son of God, as they said was denoted by this event, God would show that there was; if not, there was no gospel.

II. It is God who giveth us the victory. We are in as much danger of fancying that He is not the God of Life, but of death that is bent on our destruction, as the Jews or Greeks were. And next, it is most needful to remember that this victory is a gift. Therefore give up thy life to God, that He may use it as He knows best. Let Him have thy vigour, to turn it against the foes of thy country and of men. Let Him have thy feebleness, that His fatherly love and sympathy, and the obedience that He wrought out in Christ by suffering, may shine forth in thee. Be sure that He has most various methods of manifesting the power of His Son's resurrection here; but that, if thou trustest in Him, and dost not faint, the end will be the same; all shall share alike in the victory.

III. It is a victory. Immortality is not natural if by natural is meant that which would befall us supposing we were not voluntary spiritual beings. It belongs to us only as voluntary spiritual beings. If we surrender that condition, we surrender our immortality, we take up our position as mortal. But we cannot surrender it; we feel and know that we cannot, even when we are trying most to do it, even when we are stooping to the deepest ignominy. And therefore let us not for a moment cease to connect resurrection with faith, with hope; therefore with conflict. We cannot, if we connect Christ's resurrection with ours, if we judge of ours by His. He set His face as a flint, His garments were the garments of One who trod the wine-fat. It was an agony, though it was the agony of submission. His sweat was as drops of blood, though the issue was, "Father, not My will, but Thine be done." Therefore God gave Him the victory, the perfect victory of spirit and soul and body.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 299.

REFERENCES: xv. 57.—G. B. Ryley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 116; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxiv., p. 402; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 112; J. J. S. Perowne, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 230.

Chap. xv., ver. 58.—"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable."

I. The duty which is connected with our being steadfast and unmovable in the faith of the resurrection, and of the resurrection life, is (1) to be about the work of the Lord; (2) to abound in it; (3) to abound in it always.

II. The motive—your labour is not in vain. It is in the Lord that your labour is not in vain—empty, or void of result and issue. You enter into the work of the Lord as the Lord Himself entered into the work given Him to do. It belongs to Him to see that your labour in His work shall not be in vain. His labour is not in vain, (1) because He has gone, in that very body, the same man precisely that He was on earth, the same man complete, to present Himself before the Father whose will He has done and whose work He has finished, saying, "Behold, I and the children whom Thou hast given Me." He asks sentence to be passed on Himself in that body, and on what He has done and suffered in that body. He asks for a judicial award. The mere bettering of His condition, as a natural consequence and gracious owning of His past and forgotten history, will not suffice. He asks for a verdict on that history, as a history not buried in oblivion's indulgent tomb, but raised for righteous judgment. (2) And then, secondly, His labour is not in vain, since not only in His risen body does He challenge judgment on Himself and His work, but, with that same risen body, He takes the work up and follows it out. He carries on in heaven the work which He had on hand on earth. He resumes it that He may carry it out to its endless issues of blessedness and glory in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. And as the Lord's own labour in the work is thus not in vain, so yours is not in vain in Him; and that for the same twofold reason.

R. S. Candlish, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 346.

The truth concerning the resurrection is of vital moment. It touches the very essence and heart's core of the gospel of Christ. The view which you take of it, whatever that may be, must colour the whole of your Christianity—your whole Christian faith and your whole Christian life. So the Apostle teaches.

I. Thus, in the first place, it touches the credibility of those on whose testimony your faith rests. "We are found false

witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." This of itself is surely a very serious consideration.

II. Not only is the Lord's authority, or Divine authority, thus involved in the question of the resurrection; the reality also of His great work of propitiation is at stake. If there is, and can be, no such thing as a resurrection of the body; if the very notion of it is to be contumeliously dismissed with a sneer, as a resurrection of relics, a resurrection of corruption—then Christ is not risen. What took place on the third day after His crucifixion may have been some mysterious removal or annihilation of that which was buried. It follows, either, on the one hand, that death is not to men the penalty of sin, and, on the other, that Christ has not redeemed men from the penalty of sin.

III. Our standing as believers, our justification, our peace, is intimately connected with that doctrine of the resurrection, in the faith of which you are exhorted to be steadfast and unmovable. It is a doctrine as essential to your completeness in Christ as it is to His completeness for you.

IV. Lastly, for its bearing upon your holiness of character and your diligence in duty, you do well to be steadfast and unmovable in your belief of the doctrine of the resurrection.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Life in a Risen Saviour*, p. 325.

REFERENCES: xv. 58.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xix., No. 1111; T. T. Munger, *The Freedom of Faith*, p. 193; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 198; J. B. Heard, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 216; D. Burns, *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 88; Dean Bradley, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 225; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 412. xvi. 1-4.—E. Bersier, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 91. xvi. 1-9.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 247. xvi. 2.—E. M. Goulburn, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, xvi. 3.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 249. xvi. 6.—W. Morison, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 24. xvi. 7-9.—H. P. Liddon, *Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 225.

Chap. xvi., vers. 8-12.

WHAT Christianity does for a Man.

I. Christianity made Paul courageous. "There are many adversaries." A very good reason for leaving Ephesus, but, some of us would have thought, a bad one for remaining there. Paul looked at the "door" first, and at the adversary next.

II. Christianity made Paul considerate. "See that Timothy be with you without fear." He wished the young man to have a good start at Corinth, knowing how much depends upon the beginning.

III. Christianity made Paul magnanimous. "I greatly desired Apollos to come unto you." Paul was in speech contemptible, as in bodily presence he was weak; but he honoured the eloquence of his brother, and desired to extend his influence and fame.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 68.

Chap. xvi., ver. 9.—"For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."

I. "THE door is great" by reason of the commanding position of Ephesus in Asia. To Ephesus, as the capital of the Roman province, and the centre of provincial life, there poured multitudes daily from every quarter of Asia. Hither Gentiles and Jews alike hastened continually on errands of business, religion, and pleasure. And the lecture room of Tyrannus welcomed all who came, whether attracted by curiosity or by love of the truth. By degrees St. Paul had gathered round him a band of evangelists who carried the gospel back to their own Asian towns. Thus, to those seven cities of Asia, and to others not numbered in the mystical seven, the faith was first brought; churches were planted and organised, or (to use the Apocalyptic figure) the Divine candlestick was set up, ministering the oil of grace through the golden channels of apostolic order, and burning brightly amid pagan darkness.

II. Thus, St. Paul's figure of a great door set open exactly describes his joy at finding the gospel penetrate so soon from Ephesus through Asia. But the metaphor gains a further significance when we look at the peculiar character of Ephesian paganism. At Ephesus heathenism is living, active, enthusiastic. The very strangeness of the worship, which may have once repelled the Western Greek, was now rather a help than a hindrance to its popularity, and suited the religious temper of the time. St. Paul confronted at Ephesus a heathen worship with ancient prestige, richly endowed, the centre of the great city's interests. And yet here, more than in sceptical, idle Athens, the gospel wins its way. Without blaspheming the great goddess; by reasoning of temperance, righteousness, and the judgment to come; proclaiming, by the facts of the Christian creed, the love of God the Father, the redemption by the Son, the regenerating power of the Spirit—the Gentiles of Ephesus were converted and were baptized.

III. Who were the adversaries whose number and strength St. Paul so frankly avows? He had the deadly hatred of the

Ephesian Jews and of the shrine-makers of Diana. It is singular that the most influential friends of St. Paul in his peril are men who were high priests of Cæsar's worship, men under whose guidance Athens was soon to forget her title of sacristan of Artemis in her pride of being sacristan of the Augusti. Cæsar is not one of those adversaries spoken of by the Apostle. Yet whatever comes, whether Cæsar be friend or no, the Church is safe in the hands of her Almighty Lord. He can open a great door and effectual, though there be many adversaries.

E. L. HICKS, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Nov. 11th, 1880.

REFERENCE: xvi. 10-24.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 255.

Chap. xvi., ver. 13.—"Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men be strong."

CHRISTIAN Fortitude.

Consider the necessity and the true grounds of Christian fortitude.

I. The necessity of it may perhaps not pass altogether unquestioned. It is well known that the Christian must be meek and lowly; poor in spirit, a peacemaker; not returning evil for evil, nay, loving his enemies. Where, then, in such a character and career, is the necessity for fortitude? But we Christians want fortitude in and because of this very meekness and peacefulness which have been alleged. Some men are by nature meek, and they very often prove to be of the bravest where it was little expected, but the man who is meek by practice and duty must be a brave man indeed. Such meekness is itself the result of victory, and victory hardly won. The Christian is one who acts from conviction. His opinions are taken up not because they are the fashion of his time, but because they appear to him to be nearest to the truth and to the will of God. For this he needs a steady and manly courage. Again, the Christian has in his own course, to say nothing of his intercourse with others, abundant occasion for fortitude. He sees and feels enemies around him which others know not of.

II. In entering into the sources of the Christian's fortitude, we must at once connect it, as our text does, with the central springs of his faith and hope. From nothing short of these can it proceed. The Christian's courage is not worldly; it is not deistical; it is not merely sprung of natural religion. Stand

fast *in the faith.* The Christian's courage rests on a definite foundation which has been laid independently of himself. And that foundation is in one word, Christ; Christ in all His fulness and firmness, revealing to him his own unworthiness, his Father's love, his Saviour's work, the Spirit's indwelling witness; and all summed up in those words which no reasoner ever arrived at—my God.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. v., p. 215.

Chap. xvi., ver. 13.—"Be strong."

THE things which are necessary to spiritual strength are: (1) right and sound principle, (2) mental and emotional nutriment, (3) work, (4) regimen, self-control, and government, (5) seasonable rest, (6) genial influences, (7) a godly atmosphere, (8) help wisely administered, (9) abstinence from all enervating influences, (10) a will to be strong.

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 1st series, p. 1.

REFERENCES: xvi. 13.—H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *Sunday Sermonettes for a Year*, p. 210; L. Campbell, *Some Aspects of the Christian Ideal*, p. 148; J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, p. 341; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., pp. 16, 23; M. Tyler, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 395; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 260; D. Rhys Jenkins, *The Eternal Life*, p. 127; Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 97; W. M. Taylor, *Christian at Work*, May 13th, 1878; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 55; *Plain Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 278. xvi. 13, 14.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 73.

Chap. xvi., vers. 21-4.—"The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand," etc.

ANATHEMA and Grace.

I. This passage shows the terror of the fate of the unloving.

II. The present grace of the coming Lord.

III. The tenderness caught from the Master Himself, in the servant who rebukes.

A. MACLAREN, *The Unchanging Christ*, p. 260.

REFERENCES: xvi. 22.—Talmage, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 121; A. Mursell, *Ibid.*, vol. xxv., p. 252; Mason, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 293.

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